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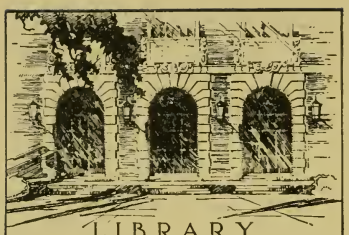

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WAYNFLETE.

BY

CHRISTABEL R. COLERIDGE,

AUTHOR OF

"AMETHYST," "JACK-O'-LANTHORN," "AN ENGLISH SQUIRE," ETC.

"To each man is appointed his particular dread; the terror that if he does not fight against it, will cow him even to the loss of his manhood."—RUDYARD KIPLING.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

PART I.

THE LIKENESS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
	PROLOGUE	3
I.	THE FAMILY	13
II.	THE HOUSE	28
III.	THE INHERITANCE	41
IV.	HEREDITARY FOES	50
V.	INTERESTING	58
VI.	GOOD COMRADES	72
VII.	THE CUPBOARD IN THE WALL	87
VIII	THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD	105
IX.	"GO BACK, MY LORD, ACROSS THE MOOR" ...	115
X.	"THE ONE MAID FOR ME"	128
XI.	"STRIVING FOR DEAR EXISTENCE" ...	141

PART II.

THE DOUBLE.

I.	A BIG SITUATION	161
II.	CROSSING THE FLETE	173
III.	MINISTERS OF GRACE	186
IV.	THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET ...	206
V.	THE MOTHER'S BOOK	221
VI.	"AS I WENT DOWN TO THE WATER-SIDE"	242

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PART I.

THE LIKENESS.

"We shall see what he will grow to. He is often unwell, very chaotic, his way is through Chaos and the Bottomless and the Pathless, not handy for making out many miles upon."—CARLYLE *on Tennyson.*

WAYNFLETE.

PROLOGUE.

IN 1785.

"That the character of the inhabitants of any country has much to do in forming a distinct devil for that country no man can doubt."—*From "John Inglesant."*

AT ten o'clock at night on the 4th of October, 1785, the master of Waynflete Hall sat playing at cards with Mr. Maxwell of Ouseley, his neighbour and his enemy. By the fireside sat Waynflete's brother, the parson of the parish, and over the chimney, in the light of the candles on the card-table, was the picture of his eldest son and heir. The squire and the vicar were big, powerful men, with fair, bushy brows, and faces that told of rough riding and coarse living,

hard weather and hard drinking, the only mark of their gentle blood that frank expectation of deference and service which marks a ruling class. The keener, thinner face of their visitor had the opposite look, that of a man accustomed to defer, and perhaps to flatter, for his livelihood. The face of the boy in the picture was fair and delicate, with eyes that seemed pleading and entreating for dear life.

Outside, all was dark and dreary, a wild autumn wind sweeping over the wide Yorkshire moors, and a noisy river, swelled by recent floods, rushing through the valley in which Waynflete stood. Within, the candles and the fire were reflected in panels of polished oak all round the little octagon-shaped chamber, and showed choice furniture with slender spindle legs and fine inlaying. The common mould candles burnt in heavy silver candlesticks of Corinthian pattern, and the many-times used cards lay on a pattern of thick twining roses worked in finest tent-stitch.

On a little side table was placed a shabby leather case, and a small oak chest with iron hasps and hinges. On another, within easy reach of the card-players, was a plentiful supply of port wine and of spirits.

Now and again, when the tall clock in the corner struck a quarter or a half-hour, the vicar got up and, opening one of the deep-recessed windows, stared out into the night. Then he flung the casement back again in silence, came back to his chair, and he and his brother filled their glasses full and drank them down. But Mr. Maxwell of Ouseley only set his lips to his. At last eleven strokes, quick, sharp, and loud, rang out from the clock in the corner. The squire flung his cards down, and the parson swore a round oath.

"Time gets on," said Maxwell of Ouseley. "I hope Mr. Guy's journey has not been unduly delayed. I hope it sincerely."

"Do you, Mr. Maxwell of Ouseley?" said the squire. "Your hope's very likely to be

disappointed, for my son Guy never fulfilled anybody's hopes in his life. Not his mother's."

And the squire looked round at the familiar furniture, dropped his rough hand on the delicate needlework, and looked with his frowning brows at the picture, the token of his dead wife's love for her first-born son.

"Time yet, time yet," said the parson, and got heavily up once more, and flung the window open. The wind rushed in, wailing and howling, and with it a sound as of a horse galloping on the wet ground.

"He is coming!" cried Maxwell; but the Waynfletes laughed.

"No, no, no!" cried the squire; "that horse never draws bridle. He has galloped ever since Guy Waynflete betrayed his friend to King James II., and saved his own dirty skin. Ye'll hear him, Mr. Maxwell, when you sleep under this roof when the wind's up—and luck's down. Maybe ye'll see the traitor's ghost. My son

Guy has seen him—or else he lied, which is like enough. Shut the window, brother Godfrey, and snuff the candles."

"Will you deal again, sir?" said Maxwell of Ouseley.

"No," cried the squire; "cards won't bring the lad back. Get your book, brother Godfrey, and read us a prayer. Pray, man, pray! and Mr. Maxwell can join us."

"With pleasure, sir," said Maxwell of Ouseley, bowing.

"The prayer-book's in the church, brother," said the parson.

Then the squire got up and opened a drawer in the little side table, and took out a well-worn book with a red cover.

"There's the mother's book," he said. "Read on. We'll fight it out to the last."

Then the parson of the parish turned his heavy chair round towards the light, and knelt up against the back of it, for his bones were something too stiff to reach the floor.

"What—what do you want to pray for, brother?" he said.

"What?" cried the squire with an oath, "that my fool of a son may get here before the clock strikes twelve, and save his honour and his house. Can't you find a prayer? Read the first in the book. The Almighty'll understand it."

The squire leant his elbows on the card-table and his forehead on his hands. Mr. Maxwell of Ouseley stood up decorously, and held his three-cornered hat before his face.

And the parson turned to the evening service, and read it straight through sonorously. The words implored pardon and peace, and light in darkness; but they carried but one prayer up to the throne of Heaven, "Let him come."

Then the parson began the Litany till he came to the travellers by land and by water, when he rustled over the leaves of his book, and behold there was a mark in the prayer for those at sea, which did not run so ill in a

storm of trouble and distress. "Save, Lord, or else we perish," he said, and the squire groaned and said, "Amen."

And through the storm and the loud rough voice the clock ticked and struck, quarter, half-hour, and three quarters, till at last, with his rough voice shaking and growing thick, and his dull old heart beating fit to choke him, the parson found himself reading the prayer for "All sorts and conditions of men."

"Mind, body and estate——"

"Eh-h!" groaned the squire.

"And a happy issue out of all——"

The first note of twelve clanged out, and the parson flung down his book.

"Lord help us!" he cried, and Mr. Maxwell of Ouseley took his hat from before his face, and waited till the clock had struck twelve. Then the squire got up from his chair, and took up the oak chest and set it down upon the card-table with a heavy thud. He turned the key in the lock, and took out a bundle of

parchments and laid them down on his dead wife's needlework, among the cards and the wine-glasses, with her prayer-book by their side.

Then he drew himself straight up, and bowed. "Mr. Maxwell of Ouseley," he said, "these are the terms on which we stand. This house and estate were to pass to you, my attorney-at-law, in repayment of the loans ye've made me, unless my son Guy came back by twelve to-night, ready to sign such other bonds as ye might please, and to marry your girl whom ye'd like to make a lady of quality as well as the heiress of ye're gains and gettings."

"Yes, Mr. Waynflete, those were the terms, and I regret——"

The squire turned and swore at him, then went on in the same tone as before, "But my eldest son Guy, who broke his mother's heart, and was too late for her deathbed, is *too late* to save his father, and himself. I leave him my curse for a coward and a fool. And I leave

it for all that come after him to follow in his steps. And for t'other one, brother Godfrey, you'd better take and put him into the Church, if you can; he's a thickhead, but an honest lad. So there, Attorney Maxwell, take your own, and the luck ye've earned go with it!"

And Mr. Maxwell, still murmuring regrets that he daren't speak aloud, closed his long fingers over the deeds. And the parson, the son of the house, put his handkerchief over his face and wept, while the wind rose higher and wailed louder, till it seemed as if cries and prayers for mercy mingled with the thud of the hoofs of the horse that never drew bridle at any door.

Then Waynflete of Waynflete Hall took up his dead wife's prayer-book and kissed it, then he walked over to the side table, and stood with his back to the other two. "God have mercy on my soul!" said he, and took something out of the leathern box. And there was a loud noise and a heavy fall, and the old drinking,

gambling, hard-living squire never lived to see whether his unlucky son came home too late.

* * * * *

But in the gloomy mists of the next morning, while the scared household were watching the body laid out for its last sleep in the room where it had fallen, there staggered into the midst of them the ruined heir, his trim locks wild and wet, his fair face marred and degraded, and his eyes mad with fear.

"The traitor's ghost—or the devil in his shape—stood in my way—I was coming——" he stuttered in thick, shaking tones.

"To the devil with your ghost! You're drunk!" shouted the old parson, and lifted his hand.

The boy cowered, stumbled and fell on the threshold. He was indeed too late.

That was what happened at Waynflete Hall, in October, 1785.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY.

THE splendid sunset of a late August day in the year 1885 was staining the smoky atmosphere which enveloped the manufacturing district of Ingleby with rich and subtle tints.

Margaret Waynflete sat at an upstairs window of a large square stone house, looking across a garden, filled with brilliant flowers and smoke-dulled shrubs, over lovely undulations of wood and field, and unlovely forms of mill and chimney half veiled in tawny, luminous mist. Beyond, hill behind hill, and moor above moor, in endless succession, were lost in grey-gold smoke and fog. She was an old woman, with a fine strong face of marked outline, and a tall,

strong frame, dressed handsomely in sober and dignified garments suitable to her years and position. Her face was wrinkled and weather-beaten, with the look that comes of facing hard weather through a long life; but it told of perfect health, of unimpaired strength of mind and body.

Nevertheless Margaret Waynflete was engaged in the religious duty of "considering her latter end." So probably she would have expressed herself, for she was a person who always endeavoured to fulfil any duty that she recognized, and such consideration was becoming to a woman of seventy-six. But what she was really considering was her former life, and that, not so much with a view to repenting her sins, or regretting her shortcomings—though if she had such she was truly desirous of repenting and regretting them—as of shaping the future in such a way that her past work should not be undone by those who would come after her.

She had had a life work. She had attempted something and had done it. She had lifted her good old name out of the dust, and had restored her fallen family to its natural station. And she was intensely proud both of her family name, of her own success, and of the means by which the success had been obtained. When she thought of the day when she should be laid in the old churchyard at Waynflete, she desired as much that the business, to which the restored fortunes of the family were owing, should be honourably and skilfully managed, as that the family name should be borne with grace and dignity.

"We owe the old place to the business," she said once to her two great-nephews; "and it's a poor thing to forget the bridge that carries you over."

Sixty years before Margaret Waynflete had been a fine, strong girl, intensely conscious of her good blood, though her father was but a working farmer, and she herself had had a

humble education, and spoke with the strongest accent of her native county. The family had fallen so completely that every one but Margaret had forgotten the fact, and it hardly appeared extraordinary, though it might be sad, when her father's death left her with the choice of going to service or of working in the mills with her little brother.

Margaret put her shawl over her head and went to her work every day; a fair, rosy girl with abundant flaxen hair, and large, finely cut features. Her beauty attracted the attention of the mill-owner, Thomas Palmer, a man no longer young, of humbler origin, and not much better education than her own, but of rapidly increasing wealth.

He courted Margaret honourably, and she married him on condition that he would send her little brother Godfrey to school. Years passed, of rising fortune which no children came to inherit. Thomas Palmer's relations were all well established in businesses of their

own, and when he died he left everything he possessed to his wife, and Godfrey Waynflete was her natural heir. Already, a little bit of the old Waynflete property, which lay in a moorland valley twenty miles away from Ingleby, had been bought by the wealthy mill-owner, and as time went on, Margaret, in whose hands the mills prospered, recovered it all, and when the house itself came into her possession she took her own name again. Her brother had married well; but he died young, leaving a son who bore the other family name of Guy. He should be the future Waynflete of Waynflete; but again disappointment came, for Guy was killed by an accident three years after his marriage. His young wife died in giving birth to a second son, and the old great-aunt was left with two babies, Guy and Godfrey, on whom to fix her long-deferred hopes.

Sixteen years had passed since that day, during which the business had been the duty, and the family name the romance of her life.

She loved both now, as people do love the objects of a life's devotion, with an imperious demand that those who came after her should love them also; and now, as she sat in her armchair, and thought of her age, and of preparing for death, she was really thinking about the two young lads, whose future fate lay in her power.

The eldest ought to have Waynflete; but it did not suit with her ideas to make him the squire and his brother the mill-owner, as might have seemed natural. The money that had been made in Ingleby Mills ought not to be diverted from their interests for the support of the Squire of Waynflete. He must be a partner in the business, even if the chief management of it fell to his brother. And the Squire of Waynflete ought to be the eldest son.

Such was the view of life maintained by this hard-working old lady, who had never known an idle day, nor a doubt as to the value of her day's work.

But she liked the youngest boy the best, and believed that he was the most likely to follow in her footsteps. Old people do not always regard young ones with blind admiration, and Mrs. Waynflete appraised her great-nephews exactly according to her own measure. She did not know that there were other scales in the universe differently weighted.

So, as she reviewed her past life, she questioned herself whether all her payments had been fair, whether she had exacted enough, and not too much, work from her subordinates; whether she had spent enough money on improvements, or too much on buying back the last piece of unprofitable moor that had belonged to the old Waynfletes; whether, on the other hand, she had ever sacrificed honesty to gain, or failed honourably to fulfil an obligation. And in all these respects her conscience was clear.

And when she thought of the future—she took heaven for granted, as her well-earned portion; but she could picture nothing but

Guy and Godfrey in her place, and herself somehow cognizant of their actions. Their young voices, through the open window, disturbed her meditations, as they came across the lawn together.

She rapped on the window, and called to them to come up, and in a minute or two, they were in the handsome, heavily furnished drawing-room, in which their white tennis-suits hardly looked at home. They were tall lads of eighteen and sixteen, like each other, and like their great-aunt; Godfrey the younger, remarkably so. He was the taller of the two, with high cheek-bones and prominent features, light flaxen hair and large grey eyes, with a certain direct honesty of expression. He was still only a big boy, while his brother was slighter, and of more finished appearance, and more delicate outlines. His eyes were also of a light grey, but they were softened by dark eyelashes set thickly on the lower lids as well as on the upper, which gave them a wistful, plead-

ing look, quite independent of their owner's intentions, and inconsistent with his slightly critical smile and reticent manner.

"Did you want us, Auntie Waynflete?" said Godfrey, in blunt, boyish tones, and using the old-fashioned form of address, in which he had been trained.

"Yes. I've an invitation for you, which I've a mind you shall accept."

"Are the Rabys giving a dance?" asked Guy, who was becoming an eligible partner.

"No; this is from Constance Palmer. Her husband was your great-uncle's cousin. She wanted to spend some months in bracing air, so I let Waynflete to her. You know the old lease of the house fell in this spring. She asks you two to come there for a visit. You shall go."

"I should like to see Waynflete," said Guy, with some curiosity, while Godfrey said—

"Is it only an old lady? Will there be any other fellows there?"

"She isn't old, young gentleman. There are some little girls—or young ladies, perhaps you'd call them—that she has brought up. She says the neighbours have called on her."

"Is Waynflete much of a place?" asked Guy. "Why have we never seen it?"

"No, Guy," said Mrs. Waynflete. "It's but a poor place, and while the house was let to strangers—as, indeed, a good part of the property is still in the hands of the old tenants—I did not care for you to go there. Now, you can both see what you think of it."

Guy gave a quick glance at her, while Godfrey said—

"I don't suppose it's jollier than this."

"Before you go," said the old lady, sitting up in her chair, "there's something I want to say to you."

"Yes, auntie," said Godfrey, staring at her, while Guy said, "Yes?" politely.

"You both know how Waynflete has been got back for the family. By hard work, and

doing of duty, and courage. When my heart is set on a thing, lads, I don't fear trouble. I don't fear man, and I've no need to fear the devil, since I know I'm in the right. And I never shall fear what folks may say of any course I choose to follow. I'm an old woman, and I tell you that a single aim always hits the mark."

As she spoke in her strong voice, and looked at the lads with her strong eyes, Guy felt that the manifesto had a purpose. Godfrey listened quite simply as to an improving remark.

"You know how, bit by bit, your great-uncle Palmer and I have got Waynflete back. And I've often told you how *my* great-uncle Guy lost it?"

"Oh yes, auntie," said Godfrey, cheerfully. "He got screwed, and then made up a cock-and-bull story about the family ghost stopping him at the bridge. Awful bad lot he must have been. Then he died, didn't he, and Max-

well of Ouseley had the place till *he* went to the bad, and had to sell it?"

"Yes, he died delirious, and my grandfather was turned out to make his way in the world. So you see, 'twas self-indulgence, drinking and gambling that lost the place, and ruined the family."

"I don't think my namesake deserves all the blame," said Guy. "His father, as I understand the story, got him into a pretty tight place."

"He had his chance, Guy, and he lost it by his cowardice—if, as some think, he was stopped by highwaymen, or by his vicious habits, if he was drunk. He was a very fine gentleman, I've heard; played the fiddle, Guy, and wrote verses; but that was no stand-by in his hour of need."

"The family ghost, himself," said Guy, in a slow, dry voice, "seems to have been an unpleasant person to know."

"Ay; there was a young Waynflete who

betrayed his friend in Monmouth's rebellion, to save his own life. He went mad, and shot himself—as the story runs—so ignorant folk say his ghost haunts Waynflete, and think, when the wind blows, they hear his horse galloping."

"That Guy who was too late was an awful duffer, if he wasn't drunk!" said Godfrey. "I'd have got over the river, ghost or highwayman, or been killed on the spot."

"It's not a nice story," said Guy. "I should think Waynflete was haunted by all their ghosts!"

"Ghost-stories are very proper for old families," said Mrs. Waynflete; "but of course no one believes them. There, it's a disgraceful story; take it as a warning. You'd better get ready for dinner."

She rose and walked out of the room as she spoke, with a quick, firm step, while Guy laughed rather scornfully.

"What an anachronism the dear old lady

is!" he said. "As if all the world depended on Waynflete!"

"I don't know what you mean!" said Godfrey, angrily. "I think she's an awfully splendid old woman to have stuck to her point all her life and won it. Catch a highwayman stopping me!"

"My unlucky namesake said it was a ghost."

"Well, but it wasn't, you know. There aren't any."

"You're the right heir for Aunt Margaret, Godfrey. She ought to leave you Waynflete."

"Why; you're the eldest," said Godfrey; "she says interfering with natural laws is wicked."

"If primogeniture *is* a natural law?"

"It's the law of England," said Godfrey, as if that settled the point.

Guy laughed again.

"Ah, Godfrey," he said, "you'll always get past the ghosts! Well, the visit will be rather jolly. I've a great curiosity about Waynflete,

and at least it will be clean. I agree with Ruskin that smoke is sinful."

"There's a great deal of rot in Ruskin," said Godfrey, "and you ought not to say things are sinful, when they ain't. Plenty of things are."

CHAPTER II.

THE HOUSE.

Constancy Vyner was sitting at a table, sorting and arranging a little pile of manuscripts, neatly clipped together, and written in the distinct upright hand of the modern high-school girl. She was dressed in a plain, girlish frock, well cut and well put on, her thick brown hair hung on her shoulders, and curled over her square low forehead in vigorous waves, as if every hair was full of elastic life. Her handsome eyes, of a clear shade of hazel, looked out, under straight brown eyebrows, from a brown, rosy face with an air of keen and critical observation; while the straight nose and firm round chin added to her purposeful look. She

was tall and strongly made for her sixteen years, and the white, well-shaped hands that held the papers looked as if made to carry out the work which the well-shaped head would conceive. The room in which she sat was as old-fashioned as she herself was modern and up to date, with small irregular panels, sloping roof, and tiny casements, through which the evening sun danced in distorted gleams.

"I *think* I'm doing well," said Constancy aloud to herself, as if convincing an opponent. "Ten shillings from the *Guide of Youth* for the best essay on Reading. I'm glad I was so careful as to what books I mentioned. One must respect people's prejudices. I have much the best chance for all those acrostics and search questions. The editor of *The Children's Friend* has asked me for another story. This will do. The little delicate boy must catch cold in a thunderstorm when his sister takes him out without leave. Shall he quite die? I think not. The district-visitor shall save his life.

And this story for *The Penny Pleasure Giver*. There mustn't be any moral in that at all! Altogether I have got twenty pounds in the last year, and some of the editors write 'Dear Madam,' and don't find out I'm only a little girl! Something ought to come out of this place. It's beautiful copy!" she continued, leaning back in her chair and glancing round her, while a certain absorbed receptive look came into her keen eyes, altering her whole expression.

She jumped up, and swinging herself into the deep high recess of the little casement, pushed it open and looked out.

Beneath her lay a wild untrimmed garden divided by a sunk fence from a large paddock sloping towards a narrow valley, with heathery hills beyond. The sky was blue and still, with long streaks of pearly silvery cloud across the hilltops. A flight of rooks came home to a group of tall elm trees beside the house, filling the still air with sound.

"It's awfully jolly and heavenly!" said Constancy, staring at the dazzling clouds with strong, unfaltering eyes. "It'll do for a description."

"What will do for a description?" said an answering voice, like a softer echo of her own, as another girl, a year or so younger than herself, came in and stood below the window, lifting up a face of almost exactly the same shape, more delicate and perhaps less forcible.

"Rooks—peace—brownish meadows, and blue sky," said Constancy. "Nice description. What have you been doing, Florella?"

"Talking to Aunt Constance about the Waynfletes, and the place. She says she is glad we have come; the house is gloomy, and she has heard odd noises. Oh, Cosy, do you think it could be haunted?"

"That would be luck!" said Constancy, jumping down. "Oh, I say, even a little noise would do to begin with! If I could only get a ghost, and the way people behaved with a

ghost, it would be beautiful! It would do for the *Penny Pleasure.* Now, Flo, remember, you are not to tell auntie I read all those novels at Weymouth. One must have lovers, if one writes a novel, and I never can understand going into raptures about anybody, so I must get it at secondhand. Let us come down to tea —the Waynflete boys will be coming. Perhaps they can tell us about the ghost. I shall investigate it thoroughly, and if ever I am interviewed by the Psychical Society, I shall take care to give more lucid answers than most people seem to do."

Constancy and Florella Vyner were the orphan daughters of a man who had never known how to make his considerable talents marketable, or to adapt his style to the *Guide of Youth,* or to the *Penny Pleasure Giver,* as self-interest required. He lived and died the vicar of a small town parish, and his two little girls, already motherless and with only a few thousand pounds between them, came under the care of their

mother's sister, Mrs. John Palmer, who had married one of Mrs. Waynflete's connections. She was a widow, well off and childless, with a house in London, and she gave all the advantages to Constancy and Florella which she would have bestowed on her own daughters. She was very fond of Florella, and as much so of Constancy as a not very clever aunt was likely to be of a girl who not only thought that she knew better than her elders, but, like Prince Prigio, always did.

Constancy did not mean to be the mere society young lady into which her aunt expected the shining light of the high-school to develop. She had definite ambitions, and definite powers to enable her to fulfil them.

"What sort of noises did auntie hear, Flo?" she asked as she put away her papers.

"She hasn't heard any. But the servants say there are queer whisperings and rustlings, and the lodge-keeper told them that one of the old Waynflete's 'walks.' Oh! what's that?"

"The ghost," said Constancy, laughing, and emerging from behind the rustling, fresh calendered chintz of the old-fashioned four-post bed. "You hear a little faint rustle all round you, then *crack* goes a panel! You listen for footsteps, and pit-a-pat up the stairs they come. The door slowly opens——"

"Don't, Cosy; I don't like it," said Florella, shrinking.

"Stop a moment, I'll show you," cried Constancy, opening a door, and running along the narrow polished oak passage beyond it. The younger girl stood still at the head of the dark old staircase, and looked timidly around her. The wind whistled softly round the house, and stirred the neglected creepers outside, so that they creaked on their rusty nails, and tapped with their long arms against the windows. She felt the bygoneness and unusedness of the place, and a feeling of awe stole over her. Suddenly a sound of eerie sobbing and sighing, followed first by a wild, mournful cry and then by a

ringing laugh sounded through the house. The next moment Cosy came running down the passage, laughing still.

"There! See how easy it is," she said. "That's how ghost-stories are hatched. I can make up a beauty for Waynflete, and study the results. Bless me! is it ringing the door-bell? No, that must be the Waynflete boys arriving. Come along, Flo, we'll be ready to receive them."

Mrs. John Palmer, kind, pretty, and easy-mannered, was a charming hostess, and the two lads had not been many minutes in the long, low drawing-room of the ancestral home that was so strange to them before she had set them quite at their ease. She pointed out to them the quaint old furniture, some of which must have been in Waynflete Hall before it was sold, and praised the old panelling and the low ceiling, with big black beams running across it. Then she encouraged them to talk about themselves, found out that they were both at a great public

school, but that Guy was just going to Oxford. He was musical, and meant to read for honours, while Godfrey, besides being well up in the school, had done everything in the way of athletics which was possible at sixteen.

Then she proposed that the girls should show them round the place; and the four young people went out together, across a lawn cut up by odd-shaped flower-beds, full of old-fashioned flowers, "inconvenient, but unique," as Constancy said, moving towards the paddock, where they discovered the possibility of making a tennis-ground.

The two boys were soon congenially employed in stepping it out, and they all grew intimate over their respective experiences of the game, and of other occupations and amusements. Florella was a kind and cheerful girl, wishful of giving pleasure; and Constancy, though she watched the two Waynfletes keenly, and "studied" them as she talked with spirit, was not at all occupied with her own relations to

them ; and, as Godfrey remarked afterwards, "was more like a fellow than a girl, except that she talked about the work her form was doing, which a fellow never wanted to do."

The four found their way into the old kitchen garden, with lavender and rosemary bushes nearly as tall as themselves, and wildernesses of untrimmed raspberries, which, in that northern country, were still bearing large specimens of red and white berries. Then, through a gate in the old stone wall, they came out into the stables and farm-buildings, picturesque and woefully tumble-down.

"Shabby old place," said Godfrey, contemptuously ; but Guy already knew that the whole scene was fastening itself on his affections. He had never liked any other so much. Constancy watched his soft gazing eyes and satirical little smile as they turned round to the entrance of the farmyard where were a pair of large iron gates with handsome stone gate-posts. Beyond

was the remains of an avenue of elms, leading through rough, sunlit fields.

"The river is down there," said Constancy. "I believe this used to be the entrance." And Guy instantly thought of his unhappy namesake riding up to the gates—too late. A vivid picture presented itself to his eyes.

"Is that the church?" asked Godfrey, pointing to a little grey building low down at one side; while Guy said, "Let us go and see where our 'rude forefathers sleep.'"

"Isn't it like a slug?" said Cosy.

The comparison was not romantic, but it was apt. The long, low, moss-grown church seemed to cling to the uneven, heaped-up ground. An old woman was cleaning it, and the young people went in.

The church was dark, damp, and cold, but a flood of yellow sunlight streamed through the open door and fell upon a flat stone at the entrance on which was no name, but only a date, "1785," and two words—"Too Late."

"Cruel!" ejaculated Guy, and caught himself up.

"Eh, sir," said the old woman, coming forward with a curtsey; "there be the last o' t'owd Waynfletes, him as saw some'at and died raving. Here outside's fayther, as shot hisself, and could na' lie in t'kirkyard, so's brother, t'vicar, laid un here in t'field and pu'd t'wa' doon, and built 't oop agen, round 's tomb. Here a ligs."

She led them out among the heaped-up graves, and showed them a round excrescence in the churchyard wall, within which was an old-fashioned oblong tombstone.

A tall, fair-haired, young man, with a lanky figure and stumbling steps, went before them, as if doing the honours of the dreary neglected place.

"Yon's soft Jem Outhwaite," said the old woman in a whisper. "He've seen t'owd genleman—*him as walks*, sir. He seed un when he wor a laddie, and went silly. He

maks a bit o' brass by fetchin' and carryin' fer t'sexton and me."

"Soft" Jem touched his hat and grinned cheerfully. Guy gave him a shilling, and the old woman another, with youthful lordliness but he disliked the sight of these dishonoured graves more than he could have supposed possible, and the poor delighted softy, tying up his shilling in an old spotted handkerchief made a vivid impression on him.

CHAPTER III.

THE INHERITANCE.

CONSTANCY made Godfrey tell her all the story of the loss of Waynflete, of the traitor's ghost, and of the Guy who was too late, as they walked home round the paddock, and looked down over Flete Edge to the river Flete at the bottom of the valley. A rough, ill-grown plantation covered the steep descent, while scattered cottages were planted on the equally steep hill opposite to them. Guy studied it with silent interest, while Godfrey compared it unfavourably with the Ingleby valley, and scoffed at the legends which he was repeating.

"Ghosts are all bosh," he said, with decision.

"Well, there are some odd noises at Wayn-

flete," said Constancy, as they reached the house. "Now, come and see a picture. It must be this wretched Guy who was too late."

She took them upstairs to the extreme end of the wing of the house next the stables. Here, with windows looking out three ways, was a little octagon room, with polished oak floor, and scanty old-fashioned furniture. Over the chimney was the head of a handsome fair-faced youth, with the last rays of sun falling on his face.

"I declare, Guy," said Godfrey, "he's uncommonly like you, especially about the eyes."

"I dare say," said Guy, but the likeness annoyed him.

"He looks very sad, poor fellow," said Florella, softly; while Constancy looked from one to the other, and thought, "I've got a lot of 'study.'"

Rooms had been assigned to the two boys at the other end of this same wing of the house, opening into each other, as was the way of rooms at Waynflete.

Godfrey went to bed, thinking that he did not much like these old legends and old scandals; and as for ghosts, the idea was too ridiculous! Still, there were certainly an odd variety of nocturnal noises at Waynflete—scratch, tap—rats and mice? Then a low murmuring and sobbing—the wind? He stuck his candle in the open window, and the flame hardly stirred. There was an interval of silence, and he got into bed and fell asleep as he ran through in his mind all the causes of mysterious noises—distant trains, coughing sheep, scraping creepers, pecking pigeons, whistling wind, scratching mice, etc., etc.

He was awakened by a violent clutch on his shoulder, and starting up saw, in the stream of moonlight from the window, his brother, half dressed and deadly pale, who fell on his knees beside him, hiding his face and grasping him so tightly that he was hardly able to move.

"Guy—I say! Guy! Good Lord, what's the

matter with you? Ill? Got the nightmare? I say—let go—I can't stir!"

Guy loosened his hold after a moment or two, but he shook from head to foot, and Godfrey, tumbling out of the bed, pushed him up on to it, and stood staring at him as he lay with hidden face.

"What the dickens is the matter with you? I say, Guy! Can't you speak?"

There was no answer, and Godfrey bethinking himself that cold water was supposed to be an appropriate remedy for sudden ailments, plunged his sponge into the water-jug, and soused it on his brother's head. It was so far effectual that Guy began to fetch his breath again, in long sobbing gasps, while Godfrey, to his increased horror, felt that there were tears on the face that was pressed against his hand.

"Oh, I say, Guy! I say—what is making you such an awful duffer? What *is* the matter with you?"

Poor Guy shivered and trembled, perhaps not

finding Godfrey's method very helpful; but he came more to himself by degrees, asked for some water to drink, and pulled the coverings round him.

"Didn't you see—him?" he whispered at last.

"See—see what? Oh, I say! Guy, you haven't been dreaming of the ghost? Oh, I say! how can you be such a duffer! You're as bad as when you used to climb into my crib, and Auntie Waynflete whipped you, after that nursemaid made the bogie and scared you."

What difference it might have made to Guy Waynflete if, at that moment of terrible experience he had had some comprehending friend to soothe and sustain him, it is impossible to say; as it was, his boyish pride and self-consciousness began to revive, under his brother's rough dealing; he made an effort to pull himself together, laughed in an odd, startling way, and said—

"Dreaming! Y-es, of course I was dreaming. Don't you ever say one word about it."

"Not I," said Godfrey. "A nice story it would be to get about. Now, am I to go into your room, and sleep with the ghost? It's getting chilly."

Guy raised himself on his arm, and stared out into the moonlight.

"No," he said, "I'll go back myself. You'll never hear another word about it."

He got up, still tremulously, and went away, *shutting the door* behind him.

Godfrey was but a boy, with all the callous stupidity of his sixteen years. He thought that the incident had been very odd, and rather disgraceful to Guy's manhood. He was glad it was over, and he tumbled back into bed again, and went to sleep.

Guy looked much paler than usual the next morning, but confessed to nothing amiss. As he went out with the others to join in trying the new tennis-ground, he saw Florella, standing a little apart from the others, evidently just getting over a fit of crying.

"I say—can I help you about anything?" he said, good naturedly.

"No," said Florella, turning upon him a pair of translucent eyes, almost as steadfast as Constancy's, and even more candid. "I—I—I've been helping to do something wrong—that's all."

She ran away before he could speak; but, surprised as he was, there remained in his mind the feeling that somehow she was a nice little girl.

Godfrey heard no more of Guy's midnight adventure during the remaining three days of the visit. The time passed pleasantly, and the aged vicar of the parish and one or two of the neighbouring gentlemen called formally on "Mr. Waynflete." The recognition pleased Guy, or at least that part of him which was free to care about it. He had very little to say to his aunt when they came back about Waynflete, speaking of it in a satirical, rather contemptuous fashion, which annoyed her very

much; while Godfrey described it fully, though he staunchly declared that he liked Ingleby best.

Shortly afterwards Guy had a sharp attack of illness. He had never been quite so strong as his brother, and he did not recover from its effects for some time. Mrs. Waynflete had little patience with any ailment less definite than the measles, and thought him fanciful and self-indulgent.

She was also much put out by Mrs. John Palmer's complaints of odd and unaccountable noises at Waynflete, which upset her nerves and frightened her servants. But for these, she would have liked to take the house again next summer, as the air suited her, and she was glad to be near her husband's family. As it was, she did not feel able to settle down comfortably.

Mrs. Waynflete thought Constance Palmer would have had more sense. She let Waynflete Hall to a working farmer, with directions to

look after the house carefully, and keep it dry.

Nothing more was heard of mysterious noises, and Guy and Godfrey did not see the place again for nearly five years, when the farmer's tenancy had come to an end.

CHAPTER IV.

HEREDITARY FOES.

"VERY few people appreciate the feeling of a place. Hardly any one can feel the London atmosphere," said Constancy Vyner, one Sunday afternoon nearly five years after the events last recorded, as she sat drinking tea on a balcony in a square on the London side of Kensington.

"I shouldn't have thought our atmosphere so ethereal as to be imperceptible to any one," said a young man who formed one of the party.

"That's a most obvious remark, Mr. Staunton; but I didn't mean fogs. I don't believe the country ever gives one just such a feel of summer as there is now. Hot air, balcony-

flowers, rustling brown trees, they're drier and more papery than country ones; sunny dust, dusty sun, and people, pavements, and omnibuses, and undergrounds—and smart fashionable clothes. It's so summery! Nobody's got the idea exactly," she said. "Of course Dickens has a London feel; but that's on another level, ghastly and squalid—or best parlour and hot-buttered toast; nor does it quite belong to the swells, though it has fashion and the season in it, too."

"Your idea is coming?" said Mr. Staunton, watching her curiously.

"I've got it!" said Constancy, sitting up with a broad smile of pleasure. "It's modern—it's democratic. It's life's fulness, roses, strawberries, sun, summer—got with some trouble, for the many. So there's a little dust. You have the best of everything—music, parties; but you go by the underground!"

When Constancy was present, she always took the stage—or, rather, people gave it to her

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—she commanded attention. She was now at college, thinking, talking, making friends according to her wont, and though her literary ambitions were necessarily much in abeyance, she wrote, now and then, an article or short story, which had just the distinction that wins acceptance, and was not quite like every one else's.

The youngest Miss Staunton was a college friend, and Constancy was intimate with her family, which consisted of two or three sisters, all busy with various forms of self-help and self-expression, and of the brother now present. The whole party lived harmoniously together, on a conjunction of small incomes, on terms of mutual independence, and, as Constancy epigrammatically put it, "went into society in the underground," and into very good society too, which is no doubt a modern and democratic development.

"Don't let us collect material for magazine articles," said Violet Staunton; "but let us

settle about the reading party. Cuthbert has heard of a jolly old-fashioned place on the moors up above Rilston, in Yorkshire, within reach of all kinds of fine scenery."

"Rilston!" interposed Constancy. "We stayed once with Aunt Connie, at a place near there—Waynflete."

"How odd!" said Violet. "It was from Mr. Waynflete that Cuth heard of the place."

"Guy Waynflete is a friend of mine," said Mr. Staunton. "I stayed with him once at Ingleby. We came upon Moorhead in our walks, and I should think it might suit for the preparation of future double firsts and senior-wranglers."

"Thank you, Mr. Staunton," said Constancy, frankly rising to the bait. "I dare say you would expect to find us crocheting anti-macassars!"

A little more discussion followed as to ways and means, and as to the number of the party, which was to consist of Constancy and her

sister, of the eldest and youngest Miss Stauntons, and of two other college students.

"I should like to see Waynflete again," said Constancy; "it was a lovely old place—haunted, too. The family lost it to a villain called Maxwell, and the old lady who has it now bought it back again."

"I never heard anything of the family history from Waynflete," said Cuthbert Staunton, "beyond the fact that the old place had been recovered. But I believe we are connected with some Yorkshire Maxwells. Do you know any particulars of the 'villain,' Miss Vyner?"

"You, descended from the hereditary foe, and friends with Guy Waynflete, without knowing it? How splendid!" said Constancy, sitting upright. "This is the story."

And with exact memory and considerable force she related the legend of the loss of Waynflete as she had heard it five years ago from Godfrey; putting in a vivid description of the eerie old house, and the still more

eerie picture of the unhappy heir, concluding with—

"The eldest one was so like the picture. He is in the business now, isn't he? I heard he didn't take a good degree. And Godfrey was such a big boy."

"Well, he is a very big boy still," said Cuthbert Staunton, who had listened with much interest. "He is a fine fellow, still at Oxford. Guy is made of rather complex stuff. Perhaps you may see him—he is in London, and I asked him to look in to tell my sisters about this moorland paradise."

As he spoke there was a movement, and a fair, slight young man came in, whom Cuthbert greeted cordially, and introduced as Mr. Waynflete.

The five years had not greatly changed him. He had the same slightly supercilious manner and the same "pretty" wistful eyes, into which, at the sight of Constancy, there came a startled look.

"I remember Waynflete so well," she said, after the greeting. "Is it as delightful as ever?"

"I have never seen it since," said Guy; "but the lease is out this year, and I believe some of us are to go and inspect it. Moorhead is eight or ten miles off—up on the moors."

"Will you tell us about it, Mr. Waynflete," said the elder Miss Staunton. "We want to go in August. Is it a place where we are likely to be shot, or glared at by indignant keepers, if we walk about? We shouldn't like to be a grievance—or to be treated as one."

"No," said Guy, with a smile. "It's only the fringe of the moor, and there are very few grouse there. I think you'd be tolerated, even if you picked bilberries and had picnics."

"That's just what we want to do," said Constancy, "picnics on improved principles. But we shall each have an *etna*, we shan't trust to sticks and a gipsy-kettle."

"I don't know how young ladies amuse themselves when they're not reading," said

Guy. "But there's nothing to do at Moorhead. It s two miles from High Hinton, and four from Kirk Hinton, and nine from Rilston—and it mostly rains up there. But Mrs. Shipley's very good at scones and tea-cakes, and the view is first-class of its kind."

'Then, when it rains, we can put on our mackintoshes, and walk two—or four—miles to buy postage stamps," said Constancy, rising. "Good-bye, Kitty, I must be going. Mind you look up your duties as chaperon and eldest of the party. Mr. Waynflete, I'm sure my aunt will be delighted to see you if you like to call. We are at home on Tuesdays—12, Sumner Square. Mr. Staunton, perhaps we shall see you too?"

The young men made proper acknowledgments, and when Constancy, with no ladies' last words, had taken her departure, Guy stated that he wished to hear the evening service at Westminster, and asked his friend to walk there with him by way of the Thames Embankment.

CHAPTER V.

INTERESTING.

CUTHBERT STAUNTON was a man with a history, and rather a sad one. He had been engaged to be married to a girl who had died within a week of the wedding-day. In the first shock of his trouble, he threw up his appointment, a recordership which had been obtained for him by some legal connections, and went off on an aimless wandering, which greatly exhausted his small means, and put him out of the running for the prizes of life. He quieted down in time, however, his trouble receded into the background, and he came back to the family home, settled down, as his sisters said, into a regular old bachelor, with set little tastes and set little

ways, a quiet, contented face, and a very kind heart. He had much cultivation and some literary power, and felt himself more fortunate than he could have hoped in being employed by his University as an Extension lecturer on literature and modern history. In this way he obtained interesting occupation, and a sufficient addition to his income for his very moderate wants.

Now, at two and thirty, no one would have suspected him of having had a "Wanderjahr" in his life; but perhaps it was from an undersense of sympathy with a not very lucky person that he had taken to Guy Waynflete; when he had met him first abroad, and then at Oxford, a year or two before the present occasion.

For Guy was a person who did not get on well with life, he experienced and caused a great many disappointments. Once or twice at important examinations some sudden illness had come in his way and spoiled his chances. Such,

at least, was his own account of his ill success, when he was pressed to give one. With other engagements he was apt, his friends said, to fail to come up to the scratch. If he undertook to play cricket, sometimes he did not turn up, and sometimes he played badly. He was musical enough to be a coveted member of various clubs and societies, but his performances could never be calculated on, and were sometimes brilliant and sometimes disappointing. There were times when his friends could make nothing of him, and no one felt really to know him. Cuthbert Staunton did not know much about him, he suspected him of more uncertain health than he chose to confess, and had discovered that the home life was not smooth for him. But he did not want to bring his own past into the present, or to inquire into Guy's. He found him congenial, in spite of the eight or nine years between them, and did not think that his various shortcomings were due to any discreditable cause.

"You are doing your London?" he said, as they started.

"Yes," said Guy, "I've hardly ever been in town. You know we haven't many friends who can be said to be in London society. Most of the Ingleby neighbours come up for three weeks to a good hotel, and do pictures and theatres, and visit each other a little. I am sent up now to 'make my way' with some of our city business connections."

"By the way," said Staunton, "what Maxwells were those who seem to have been rather unpleasantly connected with your family history? My mother was a Yorkshire Maxwell."

"Was she?" said Guy.

He was quite silent for a noticeable moment, then he said, with the little ring in his voice which people called satirical, "This is very interesting. Did your mother come from the Rilston neighbourhood? When we've settled the fact, we can consider of our future relations to each other."

The Stauntons were not people of pedigree; but Cuthbert produced facts enough to prove that his mother had really belonged to a family which had originally owned a small estate called Ouseley, not far from Rilston.

"That's the place," said Guy.

"But as for Waynflete," said Cuthbert, "my forefather must have had to drop it again pretty quickly. I suppose he played cards too often. I never heard of its having been in the family. My grandfather Maxwell was a country doctor, and didn't think family traditions consistent with hard work. I never thought about the matter, till Miss Vyner was so much excited at discovering your hereditary foe."

"I don't myself care about traditions," said Guy, in a slow, soft, argumentative tone that told of his county. "I don't, you know, unfortunately share my aunt's profound respect for the house of Waynflete. She is an ancestor worth having, I grant you. I think, if she knew, she'd make a Christian effort to receive

you kindly; but we won't tell her. As for me, I object to feuds and obligations—and—ghosts, and heredity's a hobby that's overridden nowadays. We won't part for ever."

He turned his soft eyes round on his friend, with a smile, but Staunton, who had spoken without a serious thought, saw with surprise that he had thought the avowal necessary.

"Well, my dear boy," he said, "I'm glad you don't say, 'Here's Vauxhall Bridge and there's Vauxhall Bridge Road—take the tram, I take the 'bus. Farewell.' But we must hurry up; it's getting late."

When they came into the Abbey, Guy looked all round him in a searching, attentive way. He joined in the singing with a voice full and sweet enough to do justice to his Yorkshire blood, and when it was over, and they parted, said, as if it was a thing to be thankfully noted, "I have very much enjoyed it."

When, on the Tuesday afternoon, the two young men appeared in Mrs. Palmer's handsome

drawing-room, it was full of other visitors, and their entertainment fell at first to Florella's share. Her figure, as she sat a little apart by a table covered with the usual knickknacks and flowers, had a harmonious and pictorial effect which caught Guy's fancy and remained in his memory. She was still very like Constancy, but with softened tints; hair and eyes had not the same bright chestnut hue, but were of a dim shady brown; she was paler, and though her young outlines were plump and full, they had an indescribable grace and softness. She had Constancy's straight brows and square forehead; but the eyes beneath were of another but equally modern type, seeking, longing, as the eyes of Fiametta or of the Blessed Damozel herself, but with this difference: they were happy as if in faith that a good answer waited their questioning. Florella did not talk, or learn, or do, as much as Constancy; but she knew all about learning and doing, and, in a girlish way, lived in the face of the questions

of her time. She had one gift, too, which was likely to bring her much joy, and to this, after a few commonplaces, Cuthbert turned the conversation.

"And your painting, Miss Vyner? Has it been getting on?"

"Yes," said Florella, "I have been having lessons."

"May we see?"

Florella, without any excuses or shyness, took a little portfolio from the table, and showed some sketches of flowers in water-colour. The execution was slight and not perfectly skilful; but each little drawing had a characteristic suggestiveness which freed it entirely from the inexpressible dulness of most fruit and flower pieces.

A bunch of growing sweet peas labelled, "A tiptoe for a flight," had the summer breeze blowing through them; "Pure lilies of eternal peace," had a certain dreamy, unearthly fairness that suggested "airs of heaven," and "A bit of

green" was a cheerful, struggling plant of flowering musk, in sooty soil, on a smutty window-sill, with a yellow fog behind it.

"Why, that's just how flowers look against smoke," said Guy. "They *glare* with brightness."

"Ah, that's what I meant!" said Florella, pleased. "Do you draw, Mr. Waynflete? You are fond of pictures?"

"I can't draw," said Guy; "but I can *write down* faces in pen-and-ink outline. I can't make pictures. I don't think I enjoy them."

"Waynflete likes music," said Cuthbert; "that is more in his line."

"Tunes often put drawings into my head," said Florella, simply. "The time when I began to do flower pictures was at Waynflete," she added. "Some of the flowers there looked so wonderfully old; and age is a very difficult sentiment to convey in a flower! I never could manage it."

As she spoke, there was a movement among the guests, and Mrs. Palmer caught the name.

"Ah, Waynflete!" she said. "It was such a delightful old place, and so bracing. I should have liked to stay there very much, but the noises were such a worry. I declare when I sat in that old drawing-room by myself in a summer evening, I used to feel quite creepy. Mr. Waynflete, do tell me if any noises have been heard since?"

Some of the company pricked up their ears. There are several aspects under which "ghosts" may be viewed, and there is no question that they are both fashionable and interesting. A haunted house and its owner are not often under notice at once.

Guy did not speak very quickly, and Constancy struck in.

"Aunt Con," she said, "the situation would be quite spoiled if Mr. Waynflete was willing to talk of his own ghost—or his own noises.

Of course he will not. It would not be the thing at all."

"It had not struck me that a ghost was interesting," said Guy, dryly. "As for the noises——"

"Oh," interposed Florella, decidedly; "the noises were all nonsense."

"My dear Flo," said Mrs. Palmer, "they are not pleasant when you can't explain them. They might be burglars or the servants' friends, or anything. But it's a lovely place."

The conversation now developed into ghost-stories, some of a scientific, others of a romantic type. Mr. Staunton remarking that cock-crow would be nothing to ghosts nowadays, since they were accustomed to the searching light of science.

Guy stood by the mantelpiece, and fingered a Dresden-china figure in a way that gave Mrs. Palmer a distinct presentiment of its downfall.

He looked up suddenly, "Did it ever occur

to you to wonder," he said, as a lady concluded a rather ghastly story, of a white lady who brushed by people on the staircase, and left a cold chill behind her, "whether contact with us makes the spooks feel hot?"

"Ah, Mr. Waynflete," said Mrs. Palmer, as there was a general laugh. "You're very sceptical, I can see. But you're behind the age."

She was rather glad to shake hands and say good-bye, as she was anxious to see whether he had damaged the Dresden shepherdess. But it was quite safe, even to the fine edges of its gilt roses.

"He is a nice-looking fellow, but his fingers should have been rapped when he was little to cure him of fidgeting," she said, when they were alone. "But I shouldn't think old Mrs. Waynflete knew much about children."

"He didn't like to discuss his ghost," said Constancy; "that was why he fidgeted. Family ghosts are personal."

"Cosy," said Florella, as her aunt left the

room, "I can't bear to think of the tricks we played at Waynflete. We ought to tell. It's far too serious a thing to give a place the name of being haunted."

"It was a very curious study," said Cosy; "but, somehow, it did not frighten people nearly as much as we expected. And we did not make nearly all the noises that people fancied they heard."

"We may have set them fancying," said Florella. "I could have fancied things myself, after you had been whispering and scuttering about those passages. And, remember, I don't feel bound to keep up the idea."

"It was rather disappointing," said Cosy, reflectively; "because the boys never took any notice. I don't believe they heard us, the walls are so thick. But there, Flo," she added, laughing, "it was just a bit of fun. And there are times when I feel as if I *must*—well—kick up a shindy. It's the shape in which I feel the fires of youth."

"That's all very well," said Florella. "You kick up a good many shindies. But I don't like making fun of what I don't understand.

"I don't see all the new pseudo-science," returned Constancy. "I think it's all a delusion."

"I wonder if Guy Waynflete thinks so," said Florella, thoughtfully, as she went to dress.

CHAPTER VI.

GOOD COMRADES.

UNDER a great copper-beech on the lawn at Ingleby one hot afternoon, Godfrey Waynflete was enjoying the "summer feeling" on which Constancy Vyner had expatiated in London, and was spending an idle hour in teaching his young Skye terrier to jump over a stick. Rawdon Crawley, a name appropriate to the creature's hairy simplicity, was a long grey object, like a caterpillar, with huge pricked black ears, and an expression which combined guileless innocence and philosophic power. Nevertheless, when he was coaxed, he ran under the stick, and when he was threatened, he sat still and sulked, for the perverseness of his race is fathomless.

"You confounded little obstinate beggar," cried Godfrey, shaking the stick at him; "you'll have to learn who's master."

Rawdon Crawley wriggled away to some distance, like a snake, then lay with his face on his paws, looking at his owner.

"Eh, Godfrey, ye're letting that pup get the better of ye!"

"He'd die rather than give in," said Godfrey, as his old aunt came across the lawn towards him.

The last five years had increased Mrs. Waynflete's wrinkles, but she was still upright, slim, and vigorous, enjoying the presence of her younger nephew, and, possibly also, the elder one's absence. The expression is rather strong; but Guy was so uncongenial to her that his presence could not be said to add to her happiness.

"Eh, well," she said; "I like a man that can speak up to you, and has got some grit. I've no opinion of limp characters."

"Things generally settle themselves if a fellow looks them in the face," said Godfrey, cheerfully.

"Ay, but they don't always settle themselves to our liking. I'd like, maybe, to look myself back into a young woman; but I'm in my eighty-two, and there's no help for it."

"Eh, what, auntie? You're as young as the best of us," said Godfrey, warmly."

"Why, I've no cause of complaint. The Lord's given me a long life, and I've kept my health and my faculties through it all. But, all the same, I'm an aged woman, and I might be struck down any day. So I've asked Susan Joshua, my cousin Joshua Palmer's widow, to come here and make her home for a time, and bring Sarah Jane with her. She was poorly left, poor thing; and then, if I should have a stroke, there'll be some one to look after the maids, and make you lads comfortable."

Godfrey was much taken aback, but before he could interpose, she went on—

"And I've another reason for sending for her,

Godfrey. I've made up my mind to spend some time at Waynflete before I die. So she can attend to the house here while I'm absent."

"At Waynflete, auntie? But it's not in any sort of order. Have you ever seen it?

"Once, my lad, once," said the old lady, face and voice softening. "I made your good uncle take me there for a honeymoon trip, and I said to him, as we stood on the bridge, and looked up and down the bonnie valley, 'Eh, Mr. Thomas, ye'll be wanting a bit of land, as the money comes in to ye. Ye wedded me with my shawl over my head, but ye might be Waynflete of Waynflete yet, if ye liked to try.' And he said, 'Margaret, if I can give ye your will, my lass, ye shall have it.' So I educated myself for this, and I kept his house well, and was as saving as was fitting for him and me. But there, Mr. Thomas never owned but Upper Flete Farm before the Lord took him, and it was a lonesome thing for an old woman like me to set up in a fine house alone; besides that,

I had the mill to attend to. But now, it's time I took my place before I die. Guy can go and see what's wanting."

"Let me go, auntie. Guy does not care about Waynflete," said Godfrey, thoughtlessly.

"Eh?" said his aunt. But here a rapturous bark from Rawdon Crawley, who had been penitently licking the blacking off his master's boots, directed attention to Guy's figure at the house door.

He had had a long, hot journey from London, and now threw himself into a garden-chair, exclaiming with delight at the coolness and shade.

"So you've seen the Miss Vyners again?" said Godfrey, referring to a note previously received from his brother.

"Yes; they and two of Staunton's sisters are coming down to Moorhead for a reading party in their vacation."

"A reading party," said Mrs. Waynflete. "Young ladies?"

"That's all quite correct, auntie," said Godfrey. "Girls go to college nowadays, and of course they must read for their exams. They *do*, generally."

"Eh, well," said the old lady. "I see no reason against it. I never doubted that a woman's brains were as good as a man's. I could have taken a degree myself. I'll ask Constance Palmer to bring them here before we go to Waynflete. They can pursue their studies afterwards."

"Waynflete?" said Guy, with a start.

"Yes. I've been telling your brother"—here she recapitulated her two proposals. "I'll get you to go over, and see if the place is in order."

"Oh yes, Aunt Margaret, if you wish; but I've been some time away from the mill, and there are one or two matters——"

"I hope you've brought back no new-fangled notions from town," interrupted the old lady, sharply.

"Well, I've acquired a few ideas in conversation," said Guy, slowly. "John Cooper, no doubt, will show me the fallacy of them."

"You'll have to live a long time before you're wiser than John Cooper. Tea?" as the servant appeared with some for which Guy had asked as he came through the house. "I never take tea between meals myself."

"It's new-fangled," said Guy, meekly, "or *was* once."

"Eh, Godfrey," said Mrs. Waynflete, "there's a plant broken in the ribbon border. That's Crawley, I'll be bound. He needs a whipping." But her tone, as she walked over to the border, had lost all its asperity. Godfrey and his dog were privileged offenders.

"Going to Waynflete is a jolly idea," said Godfrey; "but Cousin Susan and Sarah Jane will be confounded bores, if they're to stay here for good."

"They will so," said Guy. "As for Waynflete, it's a great move for my aunt at her age."

"Oh, she's up to anything. I say, do you remember waking me up because you had the nightmare. You ate too many raspberries with those jolly girls in the old fruit-garden. That story would be a fortune to the fellows who go in for spooks. Do you ever see ghosts now?"

"If I do, I shall not come to you for protection. You threw too much cold water on that early effort of my subliminal self to rise into consciousness."

"I say, I don't go in for that jargon. Give me a good square ghost with a sheet and a turnip, not all that psychical rot."

"If ever you do see a ghost, my boy, it will certainly be a sheet and a turnip, and by George, how it'll frighten you!"

Godfrey was boy enough to rise to this bait; though he did not like his brother very much nor get on very smoothly with him, his growls were not much more serious than those of Rawdie at the end of a stick. He was too

prosperous to be discontented with his surroundings.

When Constancy came down with her aunt to the Mill House—Florella had a previous engagement, and did not accept the invitation—she found plenty of contrasts to study, and she studied each with equal zest.

She was never tired and never bored, she was ready to play tennis from four till eight, and then, after supper, as was customary at Ingleby parties, to dance from nine to twelve. She waltzed with Godfrey as untiringly as if all her brains were in her feet. She made him coach her up in all the ways of grouse shooting, and then she roused him to fury, by wondering how long the barbaric desire to kill something would survive in the English gentleman. She made much of Rawdie, till a certain proverb occurred frequently to the mind of his master. But she also went over the mills with Guy, and learned how to tell good wool from bad, and what were the processes of conversion into

broadcloth and tweed. She picked his brains about her own special subjects, or his. She had been writing an article on English musical instruments, she had worked it all up from books, but there was a bit about music itself.

"What it does for humanity," she said; "as it does nothing for me, I have to guess it all. You are musical, have I got it right? I don't have these experiences, you know. There are such a splendid lot of things to do and to think of, I can't tell how people have time for feelings."

Guy was apparently as willing to discuss music as Godfrey to defend the game laws, and it was impossible to say whether Constancy preferred his languid, satirical courtesy and soft, preoccupied eyes, or Godfrey's overflowing vitality, and look as of a vigorous young Viking, with his exaggeration of the high, marked family features, and of the family fairness, so that his old school nickname of "Towhead" was still extremely appropriate.

The rosy, round-faced Sarah Jane, who desired to be called Jeanie, and blushed whenever Guy or Godfrey spoke to her, and was always wondering how familiar she ought to be with so-called cousins, looked on in amaze. When Constancy called Godfrey a Philistine, Jeanie thought that a flippant allusion was being made to Scripture characters, and when she talked of writing an article, as simply as of making a pincushion, the allusion appeared as a social *faux pas* to Jeanie's idea of propriety. If Constancy was so unlucky as to possess an unpopular taste, she had better have said nothing about it. But the young men did not appear to be repelled, and were both of them on most friendly terms with the visitor, while they regulated their conduct to Jeanie with a propriety and skill which any chaperon might have envied. They were aware of a crowded background of Palmer aunts and cousins, and, though they did not think it becoming to make objections to her introduction to the family, they were agreed on

the point of their relations towards her. Jeanie was a good little girl; but she knew quite well which "cousin's" attention to Constancy meant as she called it, "something particular;" she knew quite well which of the two was the most interesting to herself.

But Constancy took the young men much for granted. She was more struck with Mrs. Waynflete than with either of them.

Cousin Susan Joshua—it was the custom in the Palmer family to call the wives by their Christian names attached to those of their husbands—limited her intercourse with "Aunt Waynflete," to receiving her commands; "Constance John," as she submitted to be called with a shrug, to sympathetic and polite commonplaces, Jeanie was far too much afraid of her hostess to say anything but, "Yes, aunt," and "Very well, aunt;" but Constancy talked and listened by the hour together. Her imagination was caught by the stately, flaxen-haired old woman whose strong personality was impressed on every

detail of the life around her, whose household must breakfast at eight, and go to bed at ten, go to church on Sunday afternoon, and stay at home on Sunday evening, as by the law of the Medes and Persians. She heard, more than any one else had ever done, of old Margaret's early struggles, of her strong purpose, and of how the only birthright of which she had been actively conscious had been won at last, since of that she was more than worthy. Constancy noted keenly how impatient she was of any change in the methods of her prime; she saw plainly how Guy's indifferent manner irritated her, and how Godfrey was the kind of youth that pleased her. It was to Constancy's credit that she could bridge over sixty years, and see a point of view so alien to her young modern spirit; and Mrs. Waynflete was flattered by her preference as age must be by the admiration of brilliant youth.

Godfrey looked on delighted, and drew quite false conclusions; for, if Constancy loved Rawdie,

and admired Mrs. Waynflete, it was for their own sakes and not for his.

The hour and the maiden had come for the happy, prosperous youth. The vigorous inspiring companionship filled him with delight, the roses of that summer were redder and its sun warmer than he had ever known. Love came upon him with a rush of joyful hope, and, as was natural to him, his passion became a purpose, which he expected to fulfil. He would work hard for a degree, for she would scout a failure. He must win her; but Guy—— He was furiously jealous when Guy obtained a monograph on the "Music of the Greeks," and presented it to Miss Vyner, though it was given openly in the family circle. Godfrey could not dare to give her a bunch of the dark red dog roses of the north country, which he had heard her admire.

He was "over head and ears in love,"—no other expression could express his condition—and when she went to join her friends at Moorhead, and her aunt tired, as she said in private, of making

talk for Mrs. Joshua, betook herself to Harrogate, only hopes of speedy meetings modified his despair.

The girls' reading party must come over both to Ingleby and to Waynflete, and Cousin Susan and Jeanie would both want to see the spinster housekeeping at Moorhead.

But before these visits took place, the situation, already strained, between Guy and his aunt was intensified in an unexpected manner.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CUPBOARD IN THE WALL.

Guy had really returned from London with a "new-fangled idea," or, rather, with plans for carrying out one long entertained, and with more courage than usual for putting it forward. He liked the business, and had no lack of ideas concerning it; but during the two years that he had been at work in the mill his position there had become more and more difficult. He could not feel himself a nobody, and he knew what ought to be done; but his aunt had given him no place and no authority; to use the idiom of his county, "he had no say in the work," and Mrs. Waynflete thought so little of his powers or of his character that

she never received his suggestions with favour. She distrusted him, and he knew it, and to a certain extent he knew why. But he was quite sure of his ground now, and as soon as the visitors had departed, he proceeded to unfold his mind.

He told her, with as much delicacy as he could, but with something of her own tenacity, that in his opinion the two faithful old managers were hardly up to the requirements of the day. He thought that more pains should be taken to follow the changes of fashion, and that besides producing broadcloth and plain tweed, certain classes of fancy goods should be undertaken. This would involve an outlay for machinery suited for weaving patterns, and it might also be necessary to engage an overseer who could superintend the production of this class of goods; some extension of the premises might also be required. If his aunt disliked the notion of alterations in the old mills, there was a little mill near which had been worked

in a small and unsuccessful way by a man without sufficient capital to carry it on, who would gladly let it to "Palmer Brothers," as the Ingleby firm was still called, from Mr. Thomas's father and uncle. Guy adduced facts and figures, and made it plain that he knew what he was talking about; and, in short, showed more of the old lady's own faculty for business than she had ever given him credit for.

But one of the principles of Palmer Brothers had always been that it was a risky and unsound way of doing business to follow the changes and chances of fashion. People would always want broadcloth and tweed, but fancy goods might lie on hand, and fail to find a market; and, in short, did not suit with Palmer's way of doing business.

Old Mrs. Waynflete sat in her chair in what was called the library at the Mill House, though it contained very few books. She watched the pale, slight youth before her with the most

absolute want of respect for his personality, with an innate distrust for his facts and figures, and yet feeling with the first painful pangs of old age that she could not entirely grasp the argument. Guy was talking of conditions unknown to her. Surely the day had not come when she and her good old servants were unable to judge what was the best for the business. Surely this lad could not have pointed out to her what she had failed to see for herself. Surely he could not be in the right.

"Is there any other matter you want to find fault with?" she said. "I'd like to hear your true opinion."

Guy hesitated a little; but, quiet as he looked, he had the obstinacy of his race, and he could not resist giving his true opinion.

"Well," he said, "I don't think the mills are as popular with the work-people as they were once. There are modern ways of attending to their health and their comfort, in which we're

deficient. Ventilation, and so on. But a small outlay would set all that to rights. One must move with the times."

"So you think John Cooper and Jos Howarth are past their work?"

"Not exactly. I think Cooper's a good old fellow. Howarth I'm not so sure of."

"You seem very sure of yourself, Guy. Late hours and days away from business were not the way to make a fortune in my time."

Guy flushed up.

"I should do my best," he said; "and I believe—I am sure—that I am not incapable of carrying out these plans. And one thing more I wish to say, Aunt Waynflete. After Christmas, Godfrey will be coming in to the business. As things are now, there is no scope for both of us. With the scheme I propose, there would be plenty to do—if you allow us to do it."

"You need not to think that all the ideas come first into your head, my lad. I have

thought of that. There'll be an agent wanted for Waynflete."

Now, this was a remark which it was nearly impossible for Guy to answer. He was the natural heir of Waynflete, but Waynflete was in the old lady's own power, and she had never dropped a word as to her intentions regarding it. He could not assume that Waynflete concerned him rather than Godfrey; and yet, if it did not, the whole principle of his aunt's life would be falsified. Besides, the idea was most distasteful to him. He said hurriedly and unwisely—

"Waynflete is hardly enough of a place to occupy a man's whole time, in any case."

"Well," said Mrs. Waynflete, "you have said your say, and I'll consider my answer. But I've known the business forty years before you were born, my lad, after all."

It was the way of the Waynfletes to hide their real selves from each other as carefully as if each one had been plotting treason.

They erected quickset hedges round their hearts and souls, as if to be misunderstood was needful to their self-respect. Guy said no more, and withdrew, and he never spoke a word to Godfrey of what had passed between his aunt and himself.

The next day, just before luncheon, Jeanie was gathering flowers on the lawn, when a door in the wall that led to the mills opened, and Guy dashed in, with so white and wild a look, and a step at once so hurried and so faltering, that she ran up to him, exclaiming—

"Guy! Are you ill? What is the matter?"

Guy looked at her, as she said afterwards, as if he did not see her, and hurried in and upstairs without a word, and as she followed, scared and puzzled, she heard him shut and lock his bedroom door behind him. Turning away in distress and alarm, she met Godfrey strolling along in the sunshine, with Rawdie at his heels, and a book under his arm, a picture of idle holiday enjoyment.

"Oh," he said, in answer to her appeal, "Guy is like that if he has a headache. He likes to be let alone; he never wants anything."

Jeanie still looked doubtful.

"People don't generally look *so* with a headache," she said. "Does he often have such bad ones?"

"No," said Godfrey; "only once in a way. He'll be all right in an hour or two. Let him alone."

Jeanie thought it a very odd headache; but no more was said, though, from Mrs. Waynflete's face when Guy did not appear at luncheon, it might have been argued that his sudden illness told against his plans.

She put on her bonnet, and took her way down to the mill with a step that was still firm, though slower than of old, and asked for John Cooper. She was no unusual visitor, and had never let her hold of the business drop; and as she sat down in the little office, and cast her still keen blue eyes round her, it was

more than ever difficult to believe, more than ever distasteful to feel, that her day was almost done. The two old men who had long managed the business, though some years younger than herself, now seemed like contemporaries. She had worked under their fathers in her girlhood, she had seen them rise in office under her husband, she had now worked with them for many years, and with them she felt at one.

Partly from this, and partly, perhaps, from the incautiousness of old age, before many minutes had passed, she had made John Cooper aware, both of Guy's plans and of his strictures. It was so natural to discuss the crude ideas of the youth with her experienced old friend.

John Cooper was very much taken by surprise. The reticent and cautious Guy had never betrayed how carefully he had been "takin' notes." Had this lad really put his finger on the weak places? John Cooper was much too careful to commit himself to a direct contradiction.

"Well, Mrs. Waynflete," he said; "Mr. Guy is young, and young folks like to have something to show for their opinions. But, there's been many new fashions since you and I began to work the business. The old master never held with following the fashion."

"You can be making changes every year if you do."

"So you can do, Mrs. Waynflete; so you can. Eh, but I've seen changes."

"Mr. Guy has a notion of business, too," said the old lady.

"Did ye see Mr. Guy when he came home, ma'am?" said John Cooper, suddenly.

"No; he had a bit of headache, and went to his room. Young men aren't as tough as they used to be."

There was a silence. The old man watched the lady over the writing-table between them. He, too, was a vigorous old grey-head, with a hard mouth and keen eyes wrinkled up close. The little room was full of bills and letters and

safes. A stray ray of afternoon sun shot through the small-paned window, and showed the dusty air and the dusty floor, and the well-arranged contents of the dusty shelves.

John Cooper crossed the little room, and stood in the streak of sunshine. It shone upon his well-known grey hair, on his shrewd, weather-beaten face, and glittered on a small key left in a little oak cupboard in the wall. John Cooper opened the cupboard, and the sun shot in and sparkled with sudden brilliant reflections on something inside.

"Eh, what have you there?" said Mrs. Waynflete.

John Cooper took out a tall brandy-bottle, nearly empty, and a glass still containing some drops of spirit, and set them on the table.

"Mr. Guy left the key by mistake," he said.

"John Cooper! What do you mean?"

No asseveration could have added to the abrupt force of the intonation, as Mrs. Wayn-

flete sat upright, grasping the arms of her wooden chair, and looking straight at the manager.

"Mr. Guy keeps that cupboard close locked. But to-day he left it swinging open, when he went home—with a headache."

"Did ye see him go?"

"I came in at the door here, Mrs. Waynflete, and Mr. Guy staggered past me, and never saw me. He went stumbling out and up the lane. Hurrying and reeling as he went—as once and again I've seen him before."

Mrs. Waynflete's brown old face grew a shade paler, she still held by the arms of the chair, as she rapidly weighed what had been said.

It seemed to her that the fact of the young man's possessing a bottle of spirits was as nothing compared with the secrecy with which he had concealed it. Nor would he be the first in the house of Waynflete to fall a victim to such a temptation.

On the one hand, Mrs. Waynflete had seen

it in her father, and feared it for her brother; on the other, there was nothing in Guy's look or ways to suggest it, save the occasional attacks of illness, as to which he was always mysterious and secretive.

"Lock up the cupboard," she said, "and give me the key. And ye'll not say a word of this matter."

"Nay, not to Joshua Howarth, nor to young Jos, nor to my own John Henry. It's no matter for talking of."

Mrs. Waynflete put the key in her pocket, rose, and standing at her full height, said—

"Good day to you," and walked away with firm, unfaltering step, across the paved entrance, up the bit of lane that led to the garden wall. She went in through the gate and across the garden, and upstairs to Guy's room, at which she knocked sharply.

"Guy, I wish to come in."

The door was unfastened, and Guy stood there in great surprise.

"Aunt Margaret!" he said. "What is it? I am much better. I am coming down for some tea."

Mrs. Waynflete put him aside with her hand, entered the room, and shut the door.

It was a large, comfortable room, with a bookcase and a good supply of books, a writing-table, a sofa and an armchair, besides the little iron bed in the corner, and it was brilliantly light, for there was not a curtain or a hanging of any sort in the room. Such was Guy's taste. He looked pale still, but quite himself, and there was nothing peculiar in his manner, as he repeated—

"What is it, Aunt Margaret?"

"This," said his aunt, as she sat down in the armchair, and held out the key.

"What is it that you mean?" said Guy, with a sudden look of being on his guard, and much in the tone of her own question to John Cooper.

"You left your cupboard open, Guy, and

John Cooper, very properly, locked it up, and gave me the key. What should a lad of your age do with a bottle of brandy?"

"Confound John Cooper's meddling impertinence!" said Guy, passionately. "It is nothing to him or to any one what I choose to keep there."

"That depends upon the use you make of it."

"Has John Cooper been setting it about that I've been drinking?" said Guy, with an angry laugh. "Is that—is *that* what it looks like?"

He caught himself up with a start, and turning away to the window, stood staring out of it, while his aunt said—

"It's a matter I'll have cleared up, Guy, before I answer all your questions of this morning. I've known many young fellows take a drop too much in company. That wasn't thought so much of when I was young. But it's different nowadays; and what that bottle of

brandy means, if it means anything at all, is a very different matter again."

Whether Guy was struggling with temper or embarrassment, or whether he really did not know what to say, he was silent for some time. At last he turned round, and said ungraciously—

"On my word and honour, I don't drink. I have never been drunk in my life—yet."

"Then what does this mean?" still holding out the key.

"Sometimes—very seldom—I get faint or dizzy—with a headache—I hate a fuss, and I can set myself right with a little brandy."

There was something in the extreme reluctance with which the answer was given that justified suspicion.

"You ought to see a doctor, if that is so," said Mrs. Waynflete, with much reason; "and when I hear what he says, I'll think of what you say."

"As you please, Aunt Margaret," said Guy. "If my word is not to be taken, I don't

care in the least to be cleared by another person's."

"You ought to care how your character stands in my eyes," said Mrs. Waynflete. "Take back your key. I shall judge for myself."

She looked keenly at the young man standing in the sunlight. It was obvious that now, at any rate, he was fully master of himself, and Mrs. Waynflete had lived too much with men, and knew their ways too well, not to perceive that there was nothing in his look to substantiate the charge against him.

Suddenly he looked round at her, in a curious, furtive way—a look which he withdrew at once as she met it, but which startled her. She had caught the glance of fear and suspicion.

"Time will show," she said, as she left the room. "But I'll have it all made clear to me, before I trust matters in your hands."

When left alone, Guy hastily locked his door again, then flung himself down on the sofa.

"Oh, I am a fool, a fool!" he cried to himself. "God knows what will become of me!"

He turned his face downwards with a gesture of despair. There was no one to help him, and he could not help himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SKELETON IN THE CUPBOARD.

After a few moments Guy recalled himself from his despair, and, turning his face to the light of the open window, began, with what courage he might, to consider the situation. A shameful charge had been brought against him, and an untrue one, and yet the truth was so inexpressibly galling to him that he could hardly bring himself to contradict the falsehood.

Drinking, especially in secret, was a degrading vice ; but, however sinful, it was natural, being shared by thousands of poor miserable fellows. But the secret curse of Guy's life was, he thought, peculiar to himself, alien from and repugnant to happier folk. It was worse than

wicked, it was abnormal. He himself would have pitied, but he would not have liked, certainly not have respected, another man who—— Even to himself he would not think the fact in quotable words. That he could and did bear his hard fate in secret was all that preserved for him a shadow of self-respect.

A crisis had now, however, come, and his instinctive decisions must be reconsidered. He got up, and, unlocking his desk, took from its most secret corner a little pen-and-ink drawing, and, laying it on the table, sat down, and leaning on his elbows, looked it full in the face. For it was a face "written down," as he had phrased it to Florella Vyner,—a face almost identical with his own, and with the picture of his unhappy namesake, but neither framed by the close-cut hair of the present day nor by the powdered peruke of the Guy who was too late, but set in wild, fair locks that hung loosely round it, while, through the misery of the large, mournful eyes, there was a look of malice, fitting

the Guy Waynflete who had betrayed his friend, and whose apparition had, by tradition, caused the second Guy to die disgraced and ruined. The present Guy sat and gazed at it, till the likeness grew in his own face, and he tried to force his trembling lips into the contemptuous smile which he felt himself to deserve. Once, as he believed, he had seen this fatal face with his bodily eyes, and since then the fear of it, the sense of its unseen presence, the influence of it, was enough to shake his manhood and shatter his nerves, was altogether irresistible to him. He never knew when he might wake from sleep with this awful dread upon him. Never had he been able to stand up against it.

The code of the British schoolboy, backed by the reserve of proud and canny Yorkshire, is not calculated to deal with an abnormal strain on a delicate nervous system.

When Guy first "saw the ghost," if it may be so phrased, at Waynflete, he had felt its effect upon him simply as a disgrace; and,

though he knew somewhat better now, his instincts had never allowed him to treat it otherwise. A reasonable man might have consulted a doctor, and found out how to deal with his own nerves; but down below all Guy's opinions on the subject, all the explanations which he gave himself, there was an awful conviction of the personality and reality of this thing, which seemed half his double and half his evil genius; and what could any doctor do for that?—while he entertained the most utter disbelief in the genuineness of all modern scientific inquiries into such matters. What! analyze this frightful thing for other people's benefit?—have his experiences printed?—be regarded as a person possessing an enviable faculty denied to others? No; no one who knew what "seeing a ghost" was like could undergo such torture! They were all humbugs. While, as for religious help or consolation, Guy feared spiritual impressions or spiritual efforts; and whether his trouble was the work of his

own fancy, a possession of the devil, or a revelation from the unseen, it put him in a different relation to all supernatural questions to that of his fellows. He kept altogether apart from the subject, never joined in religious discussions, nor let himself speculate on religious questions. He feared, also, all his finer impulses; they touched on the terrible and tender point.

As he was liable to nervous headaches on other occasions than when the fear of a spiritual presence overwhelmed him, he usually attributed all disturbance that he could not conceal to such a cause. Nobody troubled about a headache. Fainting or palpitations might lead to questions, and be supposed to be dangerous. Of course all this was crude and young and foolish in the extreme; but it was instinctive to a nature, one part of which was so antagonistic to the other. It never could have continued if he had belonged to people of ordinary insight or experience; but the spiritual terrors, to which he was subject, were very uncertain

in their recurrence, and, in fact, were usually apt to come upon him at some crisis which excited his nerves; and, in his ordinary life at college, he had suffered less from them than at home, when, certainly, his grand-aunt and his brother were not likely to suspect them.

But what was he to do now? If he told, if he could so far oppose his instincts, his aunt would think him a liar, like the other Guy—or mad? That last might be. It was a view of the matter which had not escaped him. As for drinking, well, he might be driven to that before the end. There were times when the brandy was tempting. That was another ancestral ghost that might be more dreadful than the first.

But he could not confute the charge, and, besides—here a much simpler part of the Waynflete nature came into play—he was not going to notice such confounded insolence on Cooper's part, or such suspicious mistrust on that of his great-aunt.

He locked up the picture, and then, perceiving that it was still only five o'clock, and that the mill had not yet "loosed," he took up his hat and went down there, walking in upon the astonished John Cooper, with as cool a manner as if nothing had passed.

"Step into my room, will you?" he said. "There are two or three letters that I left this morning."

Then, as the old manager took up and turned over the letters indicated, not knowing what to say, and feeling his statements to Mrs. Waynflete considerably invalidated by the young gentleman's look and manner, Guy deliberately unlocked the cupboard, took out the brandy-bottle, and held it up to the light.

"Nearly empty," he said, in his soft, mocking voice. "Here, Joe Cass," to the office boy, "just run down to the Lion, and ask for a bottle of the best French brandy—for me. Bring it back with you."

"Lord! sir!" exclaimed Cooper, as the boy

departed staring; "if you *do* want brandy, you'd a deal better bring it down from the house yourself, than send the boy on such errands!"

"Perhaps Mrs. Waynflete wouldn't give it to me; and you see, I like to have it, to 'put to my lips, when I feel so dispoged.' Take half a glass of the remains of this? No? Then I will. Now, as to that colonial contract——"

Guy poured out the remainder of the brandy and drank it off. He felt revived by it, and went on with the details of the colonial contract with the most accurate clearness, till the boy came back, when he took the bottle, locked it up, put the key in his pocket, and gave Joe the old bottle to throw away.

"Well, Mr. Guy," said Cooper, desperately; "I ask your pardon if I mistook your condition; but I'd as soon see my own son with a locked-up brandy-bottle as you—at your age. Eh, my lad, it's a grand mistake ye're making."

"I shan't let the business go to the dogs in

consequence, if I've ever a hand in it," said Guy, but with more softness; "but just make up your mind that I don't care a——" Here Guy used an expression which appeared to Cooper almost as bad a breach of business propriety as the brandy, and added with much bathos, "I don't care a brass farthing what any one thinks."

This act of schoolboy defiance was the refuge of Guy's manhood, which had not learned a better mode of self-assertion. His soft eyes had a somewhat evil look as he watched his routed enemy, and then went back to the house, where he was unusually lively at dinner, and through the evening.

But either the brandy or the excitement revenged itself next day with a real headache, so violent that he could not lift up his head, and which left him pale and languid and without spirits for any more defiance of consequences. Moreover, Mrs. Waynflete decreed that he was to go with her to Waynflete.

Guy resented the proposal as an act of mistrust, and dreaded it from the bottom of his soul. He resisted it, and offended his aunt more bitterly than he had ever done before, since he could only put forward indifference to and contempt of Waynflete and its interests.

And after all, Howarth, the second manager, had a violent attack of gout, and Guy's presence at Ingleby could hardly be dispensed with. So he remained, in semi-disgrace, with Cousin Susan Joshua to keep house for him. Jeanie went up to Waynflete with the rest of the party.

He had got no answer to his proposals, and no definite authority for the mill. Nevertheless, he made his presence felt there, and people began to feel that he was master.

CHAPTER IX.

"GO BACK, MY LORD, ACROSS THE MOOR."

"COUSIN SUSAN," said Guy, a few days after he had been left behind at Ingleby, "I promised Miss Vyner that she and her friends should see the mills. If it suits you, I should like to ride over to Moorhead, and ask them to come down next Thursday, and have luncheon here. Then I would take them round."

"Yes, my dear Guy; yes, certainly. I think it would be most proper, under the circumstances; and with my being here, there can be no objection. I'm glad you've given me the hint, my dear Guy."

Guy thought his very straightforward request had been something more than a hint. He had

made it partly because he was extremely dull, and wanted a little variety, and partly because he did not choose to acquiesce in the idea that he was out of favour. Most of Guy's actions at this time were marked by a certain note of defiance.

He set off on a fresh breezy afternoon, when great clouds flung great shadows over the open moor, and the dark green of the bilberry and the purple of the heather were in full glory of contrast. He rode slowly uphill, over wide roads with low grey walls on either side, behind which grew oats and turnips, past strong-looking stone villages, all white and grey and wind swept, till the land grew poorer and more open, and turf, mixed with furze and heather, began to appear, and at length he turned over the top, and came out upon the great rolling moors, here clear and sunny, there veiled in the smoke and fog of distant centres of human life.

As he drew near the end of his ride, he saw a figure sitting on some rough ground by the

roadside, and looking up and away at a broken hillock of rock and heather, which, owing to the falling away of the ground behind, was relieved against the sky.

By the pose of her head and the lines of her figure he at once recognized Florella Vyner, and as he came near she saw him, and rising, answered his greeting with a smile as he dismounted beside her.

"I have ridden over," said Guy, "with a message from Mrs. Joshua Palmer, to ask if your sister still cares to show Ingleby Mills to her friends. My aunt and my brother are at Waynflete, but I have been left behind. And I hope, too, that Moorhead is satisfactory?"

"Oh yes," said Florella, "we are delighted with it. It suits us quite. The others are all very near by. Would you like to take your horse to the farm, and then come and join us? You will see them a few steps further on."

"There's Bill Shipley," said Guy, looking up the road. "I'll ask him to take Stella."

He came back after giving his horse to the boy, with a brighter and sweeter look on his face than it often wore. "May I look first at the drawing? What have you found out about the moor flowers?"

"Oh, they are so difficult—look at those harebells on the top of the road, swinging about in the wind—blue against blue. It is such heavenly colour. But I can't paint them! I haven't begun to try. I'm seeing them!"

"I see," said Guy. "Yes, the sky seems to show through. But what do they say? Your pictures all say something. Are they moor spirits?"

"Well," she said, "I don't think I quite know. But what I want to say is 'living blue,'—you know the hymn?—

> 'Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
> All dressed in living green.'

That gives one such a feeling of spring."

"Yes," said Guy, "things growing. And 'living blue'?"

"Well," said Florella, looking up at the harebells, "I think it must mean thoughts—spirit, soul, growing and springing, perhaps. They are so very ethereal!"

Florella had much of Constancy's self-possession. In her it showed in a calm simplicity of manner, absolutely without effort or constraint. Guy forgot himself also, for him a rare pleasure.

"I see," he said, "I hope you'll get them done."

"But they *shine* so," she said; "one can't make them glisten. And the heather is very difficult, too. But that I have tried."

She showed her sketch-book, containing more flower studies and a few landscapes.

"I should like to sketch," said Guy, as he looked, and made a few comments.

"But you could, I think, because you can see. And it is very interesting. It is impossible to think of anything in the world but the thing you are drawing. That is all I have. My

sister and all of them are just behind the hare-bell rock—shall we come?"

Guy followed, and in a few minutes they were looking down on a cheery group gathered in a hollow of the ground—five skirts and hats among the heather. One or two little puffs of steam showed where the sophisticated "Etnas" were boiling the water, and in the midst Constancy, in a red blouse and brown cap, was evidently concluding an argument.

"Very likely we might like it as well as they did, if we had the same opportunities."

"Cosy! you're a traitor. As if we want young men to come and interrupt us, like those dreadful girls in——"

"Mr. Waynflete," said Florella, descending upon the party.

Violet Staunton, who was the last speaker, sank into the heather with a gasp, and a sensation ran through the party. Constancy stood up and held out her hand.

"Mr. Waynflete, we are abusing Miss Austen's

heroines for liking visitors. But, you know, we promised to give you some tea."

Guy coloured and smiled. He felt a little shy, but much as if he had stepped into a fairy-ring. Away from his own people and his perplexities, he was like another person, bright and gay, and was soon giving his invitation, and asking if Cuthbert Staunton had made his holiday plans, or if he could come to Ingleby for a bit, while he helped to hand round the tea and the tea-cakes, for the merits of which he had vouched in London. Thus, at his ease, he had a gentle, friendly manner and a pleasant face, as he dealt with the eccentricities of an "Etna" which refused to boil. Florella felt as if her short, childish intercourse with him had been longer and more recent.

"There!" he said, in a low, half-shy voice, as he glanced at Constancy, "I'm sure Mr. Elton could not have made himself more useful."

"It is humiliating," said Constancy; "but

that 'Etna' beat us! Would it if we had the franchise?"

Constancy did most of the talking. Florella sat silent and looked, as she mostly did, happy. The other girls thought that Cosy need not have made it so evident that she was amused by the intruding visitor. Presently a trap was seen coming along the rough, narrow road. One man only was in it, and as the sound of the wheels attracted his attention, Guy looked up and said, in a tone of surprise—

"That's Godfrey!"

Another moment or two, and they saw the dog-cart stop at the farm; the driver dismounted, picked a long and hairy object off the seat beside him, together with a large basket, and came over the heather with long striding steps. In a minute Godfrey and Rawdon Crawley appeared at the top of the hollow.

"My aunt has sent me," he began, but at sight of Guy a cloud fell upon his handsome,

joyous face, his air of happy expectation faded entirely, and he paused in his speech. Constancy again came to the rescue. She introduced him all round, remarked with cool amusement on the odd chance that had sent both brothers to see them at once, and as Godfrey refused her tea, offered it to Rawdie, who had greeted first her and then Guy with simple cordiality. Guy fell silent, and watched his brother with slightly lifted brows, as if a new idea had struck him. He was quite cool, and not at all put out.

"Has Aunt Margaret asked the ladies to Waynflete?" he said.

"Yes, on Tuesday. She thought the Miss Vyners would like to see it again."

"Immensely," said Constancy. "She promised me to ask us."

Guy, still looking slightly amused, got up and said that he had the longer ride, and must get back, and would expect to see them all on Thursday at Ingleby.

"Tell my aunt I'll come over to Waynflete on Tuesday by the first train in the morning," he said as he made his farewells, and went to get his horse.

Godfrey was desperate. He hated all the other ladies who surrounded Cosy. He hated Guy, who had, he thought, come with the same object as himself. He could hardly bring himself to refer to the basket which he had filled that morning with all the fruits and flowers which he had thought Constancy might recollect seeing at Waynflete. When he did bring it forward, he muttered, that his aunt had sent it, which was not true.

Cosy dived into it.

"White raspberries!" she exclaimed. "Now, didn't they grow just by the gate into the stables? I hope that lovely garden is as untidy as ever."

"It's worse, I think," said Godfrey, more amiably; "but there are plenty of raspberries ready for you to pick."

"Delightful!" said Cosy, and Godfrey's brows smoothed till he looked as friendly as Rawdie.

Presently they all walked back to the house together, and Constancy showed him the long, low sitting-room, full of their books and writing-materials. She took his visit to herself, and entertained him in the most cheerful fashion. But she expressed great pleasure at Guy's invitation to Ingleby, and finally sent Godfrey away when his cart was ready, with a perplexed and appealing look in his grey eyes, and a puzzled wrinkle on his brows, even while she lifted Rawdie into the cart and kissed his nose tenderly, telling him to look out for her on Tuesday morning at Waynflete.

"Constancy," cried Violet, "you abominable girl! You behaved worse than any of the Miss Bennets, or Emma Woodhouse either. I'm sure those young men must have thought you were delighted to see them."

"Well, I didn't mind them. I could not summon the daughters of the plough and bind

them in chains, could I? You are all so narrow minded."

"Narrow minded?"

"Yes; you should take everything as it comes. The Miss Bennets couldn't exist without morning callers; but if we can't stand half an hour of them, we make them of equal importance. And besides, you know, they represent a side of life which exists. We must ignore nothing."

"It's a most contemptible side," said Violet. "And besides, if Cuthbert knows, he *will* laugh at us. I do want him to see we mean business."

"I mean business," said Cosy; "if by business you mean reading; but I like to study life all round."

"Yes," said the elder Miss Staunton, "just as you like to study opinions all round, and consider smiling, views which, if they were true, would send one out into a moral and spiritual wilderness. You see the force of nothing."

"If so, there must be an awfully stupid piece in me," said Constancy, as if rather struck.

"But, after all, you know, whatever is true, the world has got along somehow hitherto, and I suppose it will continue to do so; so why worry?"

"Look here," said Florella, "if we quarrel over the young men, we shall be more like the Miss Bennets than ever. We belong, you know, a little to the Waynfletes through Aunt Connie, and we knew them long ago. I am going back to my harebells. Violet, will you come?"

A great many young women aspired to the friendship of Constancy Vyner, and courted her, as girls do court each other. Florella's friends did not make her of so much importance; but they told her all their troubles.

CHAPTER X.

"THE ONE MAID FOR ME."

When old Margaret Waynflete drove up to the door of Waynflete Hall in the Rilston fly—for the old stables were not calculated for the accommodation of valuable horses—she never thought of herself in a picturesque light, nor felt, as Godfrey and even Jeanie in a measure did, for her, that this was the moment for which she had lived.

But she looked round her with the most lively curiosity. When she sat down in the low, crowded, old-fashioned drawing-room, she did not admire it, nor feel comfortable as she drank her cup of tea and looked about her. She scolded Godfrey and Jeanie for expressing

anxiety as to the effect upon her of the unwonted journey; for she felt quite strong and vigorous, even while she repeated to herself that it was right for her to see Waynflete before she died. And see it she did, for she inspected the old house from attic to cellar. She went over the gardens and out-buildings, she had herself driven up and down the steep sides of the Flete Valley and through the shabby village, she attended service in the picturesque old church, where a newly arrived young vicar, himself aghast at the condition of his church and parish, only struck her as an unpleasing contrast to the old rector of Ingleby. She liked none of it very much. She *was* an old woman, and she could not take to new surroundings. Ingleby was home. Waynflete was for the next generation. All the neighbourhood called upon her, and paid attention to her and her nephew.

Godfrey was well aware that his position, as apparent master of the house, was an awkward

one. He would also have preferred Jeanie's absence; the new neighbourhood would draw conclusions, which his downright old aunt would never have anticipated. He meant, when the visit of the Moorhead party was safely over, to write to Guy and to offer to change places with him; but, when he found him at Moorhead before him, inviting Constancy to Ingleby, and proposing to come to Waynflete to meet her, all other thoughts were swallowed up in angry jealousy. All places were the same to him where she was not, and he could only think of keeping his chance of seeing her some time without Guy's interference. Guy appeared early on the appointed Tuesday. He could only, he said, stay one night, as Staunton was coming to him on the next day.

"As you kindly allowed me to ask him, Aunt Margaret," he said, punctiliously.

"I've no objection to Mr. Staunton, you can bring him over," said Mrs. Waynflete. But whatever her own feelings as to the new home

were, she watched keenly for Guy's impressions of it.

He said no word to gratify her; but in that perfect summer day, he, in his turn, noted every detail.

The old house, with the deep and varied tinting of its lichen-covered tiles and bushy creepers, seemed to him, as he stood in the garden, and looked at it intently, to be full of character and individuality.

In his secret heart, he thought, as he had thought before, that the place had a charm altogether its own. How he should like its quaintness and its beauty if it ever was his own, and if—— Nay, how he did like it now, and how oddly he felt himself to be a son of its soil—to be, somehow, akin to it. Guy was in all ways sensitive and impressionable, open to the influences that surrounded him, to every change of scene and atmosphere. He wandered round the flower-beds, and looked for the quaint "old" flowers of which Florella

had spoken. Could he find any to show her? Yes; there were columbines of odd, dull, artistic tints, roses of sorts unheeded by the horticulturist, and sundry blossoms, somewhat belated in the keen northern air, of which the ignorant Guy knew nothing.

As he looked, Rawdon Crawley began to bark; the sound of wheels was heard, and a waggonette, full of straw hats and bright dresses, drove up the rough ill-kept road that led to the house. Guy, half smiling, held a little back, as he saw his brother press forward eagerly; he was amused at the idea of Godfrey in love, not having ceased to regard him as a schoolboy. He was not in love himself; but even for him, as he came forward, it was Constancy who held the stage, looking handsome and happy, a concentration of life.

"I am perfectly convinced," she said, looking round, after the greetings were over, "that this place breathes out a story. It quite *talks* with characteristicness!"

"I should like to think that you had to do with the story of it," said Godfrey, feeling his ears hot with the sense of self-committal.

Constancy looked at him, and at that moment there entered into her a particularly charming and engaging little demon, who recommended himself to her in a form which disguised his old and well-known features, and made him come out quite new. Godfrey was betraying himself in every word and look; but to Constancy, whose even pulses had never yet beat quicker for any emotion whatever, his boyish passion did not present itself in a serious light. She might study this side of life a little, it would be amusing and instructive. It has been amusing, ever since Cleopatra angled for fishes.

The result of her study was that Godfrey spent a day of chequered but tumultuous bliss, and that the story of the old house mingled itself inextricably with her own.

For Guy the hours passed so pleasantly that

he forgot his dread of the coming night. Not being in any way conscious, he asked Florella to come and look for subjects among the flowers, quite easily. And she came, remembering them much better than he did, looking for old favourites, and showing him which she had formerly tried to paint.

"I cannot do the harebells," she said. "I have drawn them; but the colour and the light is altogether impossible, and I have had to come down to a little bunch in the rock—quite earthly — but they just recall the others. Perhaps some day, when I have practised a great deal, I may be able to paint the heavenly ones."

"You made me *see* them," said Guy.

"That's something, isn't it?" she said. "But that's why drawing is so good. It teaches one to see."

There was plenty of general chatter, and the whole party strolled about, ate fruit, and picked flowers together.

A tall fair young man was rather feebly sweeping the garden path. He touched his cap as the party passed him, and said, in a cracked, but cordial voice, "There's rasps down yonder, sir, for t'yoong leddies."

Guy recognized him, with a start of distaste, as the "soft" lad he had seen in the churchyard.

"Thank you, Jem," said Godfrey, "we'll look for them. This way, isn't it, Jeanie?"

Jeanie was very shy, and very much afraid of these "clever girls;" she secretly disliked the thought of them. But it was pleasing to find how open they were to raspberries and Morella cherries, and, in the afternoon she felt a pride in showing them over the house, and pointing out the pictures and other curiosities.

Guy avoided this part of the entertainment, on the excuse of making arrangements about the time of return, and as he came back from interviewing the driver of the waggonette, he found that Florella was in the garden, sketching

a bit of snap-dragon on the top of the low wall that divided it from the fruit garden. Guy made for her pretty blue dress, which reminded him of her blue harebells.

"Do you like the flowers better than the house?" he said.

"I did not much want to go over the house," she answered; "and if you please, Mr. Waynflete, I think I should like to tell you why."

"Why, have you any reason?" said Guy, startled.

"Yes," she answered. "Of course it is a very silly thing, and my sister never thought of it but as the merest joke; but I have always felt it was more wrong than we knew. When we were here, we used to hide and make odd noises, to see whether we could make people think it was the ghost."

"What?" exclaimed Guy. "What did you do?"

"Why—nothing very much," said Florella, "after all. But we rustled about when we

thought the maids would hear us, and stamped along the passages to make footsteps, and hid when any one was coming, and Constancy pretended to sob and cry, and then we watched to see how people would take it; we never dressed up, you know, it was only noises. Of course there was a notion that there *were* noises, or no one would have noticed."

"And didn't—did no one find you out?"

"No. I don't think that really we frightened any one very much. Of course, I always knew it was naughty, and that Aunt Connie would be angry if she knew. But, as we went on doing it, I got to have a feeling of what it would have been like if it had been true; perhaps I frightened myself, for we didn't make all the noises that we heard. And I don't know, Cosy did it quite simply; but I got to feel as if there was something *profane* in playing tricks with things one could not understand, and it has always been on my conscience. So, as you were here when we did it, and as you belong to the

place, I thought I would confess, for really I have always felt it more wrong than many things I've been punished for."

"Why do you think that?" said Guy, quickly.

"Why, I suppose taking false and silly views of great subjects is one of the chief things that prevent people from being really good. Then you *can't* see."

"If you don't mind," said Guy, "will you come with me and look at that picture?"

He could hardly tell what prompted the request; but he felt that he could better bear the sight of the picture with her than alone.

Florella agreed, though a little surprised, and they followed the rest of the party into the house and upstairs. They heard their voices as they made the round, but the little octagon room was empty.

"Look at him," said Guy, "and tell me *just* what you see in his face. Yes," as she glanced

at him, "I know he is like me. But if you were drawing that face—like a flower—what should you try to show?"

"He looks very unhappy," said Florella. "He wanted some one to help him."

"He had no one. He was a victim to himself or his fate. Don't you think he looks rather a despicable fellow?"

"No; but he looks as if he did so need to be helped. Yes; he does look like a person who might fail in a desperate crisis."

"As he did," said Guy. "A man with that face must, you know. Isn't that what you see?"

"I suppose," said Florella, suddenly and simply, "that if he had really realized the presence of God, he could have borne—even the ghost."

"Why?" said Guy, abruptly.

"It would be a spiritual power, great enough to conquer the spiritual fear," she answered.

"I wish I could have masses said for his soul,"

said Guy. "If we were Roman Catholics, I'd ask you to pray for him."

"Well, I will," she answered. "He is living, somewhere, and I am sure it is right to pray for him."

"Thank you," said Guy, earnestly.

There was a call, and they hurried away to join the others. They had forgotten both themselves and each other. It was only afterwards that Florella realized that she had said unusual things, or Guy that he had heard them. But strange to each other they never could be again.

Constancy and Godfrey had thought of each other, and of the effect they were producing on each other, all day long. Nevertheless, they parted as "Strangers yet."

CHAPTER XI.

"STRIVING FOR DEAR EXISTENCE."

In the soft interrupted stillness of the summer night Godfrey Waynflete leant out of his window, and lived over again the hours of the day. The country stillness was constantly broken by the whirr of a bat, the twitter of a disturbed sparrow, or by the homely sounds of cattle and poultry in the farm and fields close by. But Godfrey neither heard nor heeded. He was deaf to the sounds within the house, the occasional strain and creak of the old boards and panels, the patter of rats and mice, which constantly disturbed the slumbers of Rawdie, who slept on a mat in his master's room. His blood was all on fire; sleep was impossible to

him. He could think of nothing but that in two days he would meet Constancy again at Ingleby. It did not seem possible to Godfrey that so intense a desire should fail to work its own fulfilment. No one and nothing should stand in the way of this demand of his spirit for the thing it craved. The whole world was widened, transformed, glorified. Constancy—*Cosy*. How the name suited her! The memories of that old boyish visit started into life, till the old house seemed to thrill with her presence.

"Talk of haunting," thought Godfrey, laughing to himself. Constancy was the presence that filled Waynflete through and through. There was no room there for any ghosts! Then suddenly, without warning, there fell upon him a doubt, a fear, a presentiment of disappointment, a change of spirit so complete that it was almost as if a sudden change of atmosphere had swept through the room, and chilled him. A moment before his joy had had

hardly a misgiving, now he suddenly felt utterly without hope.

He started upright, and pulled the casement to, for the night-air felt all at once chilly. He shook himself together, and began to pull off his coat, when Rawdie sat up in the moonlight, and began to howl as if he thought his last hour had come.

"Confound you, Rawdie, hold your tongue!" cried Godfrey, himself reviving, when the door leading into the next room opened, and Guy stood there, fully dressed.

"What the deuce is the matter with Rawdie?" he said, sharply.

"It's the moon, I suppose," said Godfrey, pulling vainly at the curtain. "He's got the nightmare this time, instead of you! I never knew him howl at the moon before. Here Rawdie, Rawdie! Hold your noise! Shut up!"

Rawdie jumped into his master's arms, his howls subsiding into whines and whimpers.

Guy stood leaning against the door, watching them. He set his teeth hard, as, in the broad white streak of moonlight, the Presence which he feared took, as it seemed to him, visible shape. It was not now a face flashing into his own, but a shadowy figure, with averted head, moving across the room, as if in hurried, timorous flight. Guy's pulses stood still, but this time his nerves held their own. He waited, and the figure, the *impression*, passed him quickly by, through the doorway, into the room he had just left. Guy shut the door suddenly upon Godfrey and Rawdie, and stood with his back against it—looking. Then the figure turned the never-to-be-forgotten face full upon him, and it was to him as if his own eyes looked back on him, with malicious scorn of himself; as if this scared and hunted creature were an aspect of himself. He crouched and cowered against the wall, and gazed back at the spectre, but he felt that the sight, if sight it were, was as nothing to the inward experience of the soul

of which it was the expression, the despair, the degradation of irresistible fear.

Whether it was a second or an hour before the moonlight had gone from the room, and with it the impression, Guy could not tell; but he knew at once when it was gone, and stumbling towards the bed, threw himself down on it.

There was a candle burning, but the room swam and darkened before his eyes, he was deadly faint, and as the life came back to him a little, the panic which was wont to come upon him, overwhelmed him, and he trembled and hid his face. It passed sooner than usual, much sooner than usual self-command came back, though the throbbing of his heart forced him to be quite still, and took all his strength away. As the power of thought slowly came back to him, the memory of Florella's words came back also. The Presence of the Divine Spirit! Could that become real to the soul?

Guy knew what one spiritual experience was,

and he did not deceive himself into thinking that he had ever known this other. If the door of his soul was open to the unseen, no such messenger had ever sought entrance; indeed, he had done his best to bar the way.

But now, over his bewildered spirit there swept another vision, new and fair, the vision of a human sympathy that might make the weak strong. If this wise girl could know—could *see?* Before the hope of her helpfulness, his foolish pride would give way. He could nerve himself to confession. The next moment he knew that to lay his burden on the innocent soul of another, to seek a love which must suffer in his suffering, would be of all cowardly methods of escape the most contemptible. He must try to think more clearly. He managed to stand up, and to find the brandy, which, with most pitiful foresight, he had brought with him. He had drunk it before he suddenly felt how significant was the eagerness with which he took it. It was another terror, indeed, and he

threw himself down again on the bed and lay half dozing, till with the daylight and the singing of the birds, he started awake, with his nerves all ajar, and without energy enough to undress and go to bed properly.

He managed, however, to make his appearance downstairs, where Rawdie's cheerful bark recalled the poor little dog's terror of the night before. Guy picked him up, and looked into his cairn-gorm coloured eyes, but no change had come into them. Godfrey, too, was eating his breakfast, and making Jeanie talk about Constancy.

Guy played with his tea-cup, and made critical remarks on the young ladies, till the trap that he had ordered to take him to the station appeared, when he cut short his farewells, and went off hastily, without giving his aunt time to say that she wished him to come back again shortly.

As he grew calmer with the increasing distance, he took a resolution, which was

the first beginning of a struggle against his fate.

Cuthbert Staunton arrived in due time, in a holiday humour, and having plenty of conversation, he occupied Mrs. Palmer's attention until the hour came for the two young men to wish her good night, and betake themselves to a room devoted to the use of Guy and Godfrey, where they could talk and smoke at their leisure.

"Yours is a charming climate," said the visitor, "where any one may light a fire in August with a clear conscience. Short of southern moonlight, etc., there is nothing so delightful."

"Sit down in front of it," said Guy; "we're generally glad of one here, and it looks cheerful. Now, I'm expecting you to put me up to all the newest lights—one gets rusty down here. About the spooks, for instance, the Miss Vyners were talking of in London. I want to examine into them a bit. Did you ever come

across a fellow who had seen one—by any chance?"

"No," said Staunton. "I should like to come across a first-hand one, very much."

'Well, here's your chance, then. I have—twice."

"Seen a man who has seen one?"

"No, better than that, seen the genuine article, myself. I—I want to know how to manage him. It seems the correct thing, nowadays, to entertain ghosts and imps of all kinds."

"I don't know any, personally," said Cuthbert, purposely echoing Guy's bantering tone, though he noticed the matches he struck in vain, and the suppressed excitement of his manner. "But I should like to hear your experiences very much."

"He paid me a visit last night," said Guy.

"And what is he like?"

Guy left off trying to light his pipe, and leant back in a corner of the big chair in which

he was lounging. The plunge was made. He was shaken to pieces with the effort, but he still endeavoured to maintain a tone of indifference.

"I think I'll have to tell you a little family history," he said; "if it won't bore you."

"Not at all. Tell me just as you can—as you like."

"Well, but you know, I believe, about the old traitor who drank himself to death from remorse, and naturally, haunted his descendants. Some of them drank, and, in fact, there was always an inclination to an occasional good-for-nought. Well, then came the Guy who was too late—my namesake—so, by the way, was the traitor—that story you know, too. I don't believe my father, or grandfather, were quite all my aunt could have wished. They died young, you know; but I'm not aware that they ever saw the ghost. But, five years ago, when we went to Waynflete, to see Mrs. John Palmer, I did."

"You saw the ghost of your ancestor?"

"Well! I had seen Guy's picture; I was full of it, and full of seeing the place for the first time, and the face flashed upon me just like the picture. The picture's *like me*, you know; absurdly so. I saw him—plain as I see you. Well, that once wouldn't have mattered, it would only have been a queer thing. But——"

"But that was not the only time?" said Cuthbert.

"I never *saw* him again till last night, but—I—*feel* him. I wake up half mad with fear. I have dreamed of him. I don't know what it is, the fit seizes me, and when I've scourged the folly out of me, I faint, or my heart gets bad. I haven't quite been able to hide that; but no one knows why. No one knows that I am afraid of my own shadow!"

"Gently, my dear boy," said Staunton, kindly. "Keep quiet for a minute. It's hard work telling me; makes your heart beat now, doesn't it?"

"Let me get through it. These fits have come and knocked me up, over and over—muffed my exam.—for my degree—made a fool of me, times out of number. But, last night—he was there—the whole of him, *myself* in that queer old dress, as one might look when one's chance was over, and one wanted others to share one's disgrace. I saw him; but, oh, my God, Cuthbert! It's not the *seeing;* but no other Presence is ever so real—so close! So, I'm catching at a rope. He'll have me; I shall have to follow him—but—I'm trying to fight."

Guy had dropped all his pretence at indifference; he spoke in short, stifled whispers, his eyes dilated with fear.

Cuthbert laid his hand on the fingers that were clutching the arm of the chair, and said gently, "I am very glad you have told me. You'll feel better soon. It is very bad for you to suffer without any help."

Guy clung to the warm, human clasp, it was

unexpectedly comforting. Then he whispered, "I don't drink, you know, *yet*. But he'll drive me to it. He's ruining my life!"

Cuthbert did not speak for some moments. Then he said, "Of course, there is more than one view to be taken of these things."

"Oh yes, I might be mad—or lying."

"Well, I don't feel driven to those conclusions. Do you mind being questioned a little?"

"No; I think I should like it. I've felt so much alone."

"Yes. You feel more afraid of the terror that seizes on you unexpectedly, than of the—thing itself?"

"Yes," said Guy, hesitating; "at least, I mind *feeling* he is there, more than seeing him. That's a detail."

"Try to tell me what you mean by *feeling*."

"I can't. It's another sense."

"And do you feel nothing else with this sense?"

"No," said Guy, decidedly. "Nothing. And, many things that I could like——"

"Yes. Try and tell me. I think I shall understand."

"Yes; oh, you're so kind. I've always felt he never would come where you were. Some people fret me, even in the next room. But, music now—that might lift one away from him, but he stops it; he always stops what I care most for. I could bear it, but my body won't; that betrays me."

"Yes, that wants careful looking to. Now, my boy, try and tell me what your own view of the matter is. What you think most likely to be true about it."

Guy looked up with pitiful puzzled eyes.

"Ask me more questions," he said.

"Ever read up the subject?"

"No, I began; but I daren't——"

"You feel sure it is something besides your own nerves?"

"Yes."

"Something or somebody outside yourself?"

"Outside myself? I don't know that."

Guy suddenly caught Cuthbert's hand again and pressed it hard against his forehead, as if to steady his brain. Then he spoke more clearly.

"I don't know if what comes over me is my ancestor himself, or the fiend that tempted him, or my own worst self. As for the vision, I'm not so much afraid of *that*."

"Then what you want is to be able to resist this influence?"

"Yes, before it ruins me, body and soul."

"Well, you must let me think it over. Depend upon it, I'll not leave you alone to fight the battle. Now, you'll sleep to-night?"

"Oh yes, I am not frightened now," said Guy, simply.

"Well then, we'll go to bed, and talk it over again to-morrow. But you must come up to

town with me and see a doctor, you need only tell him that your nerves have had a shock. But I wouldn't avoid the general subject. Such experiences are not altogether exceptional."

"Nervous affections, in fact," said Guy, dryly.

"Well, sometimes, you know. Anyway, there are safer remedies than brandy, if your heart gives you trouble. And mind, come to me at any time, or send for me. Bring it into the light of day."

Guy felt soothed by the kindness, and he knew that the advice was good. But, all the same, he knew that it was Florella who had touched the heart of his trouble.

"You're awfully kind," he said, gratefully.

"I know the look of trouble," answered Cuthbert; "and fate hasn't left me many anxieties. I'm quite free to worry about you."

Guy's eloquent eyes softened. The fellow-

feeling was better than the reasoning. But as he got up to go to bed, he said in his usual self-contained voice, "You know, Rawdie saw him too, and had palpitations."

PART II.

THE DOUBLE.

"Where He stands, the Arch-Fear in a visible Form,
Yet the strong man must go."

ROBERT BROWNING.

CHAPTER I.

A BIG SITUATION.

Florella Vyner lay awake in the cool misty light of a moorland morning, and thought, not for the first time, of her conversation with Guy Waynflete. She had the power of intense and steady contemplation, that was the faculty that enabled her to "see," and when she woke to the sense of the unusualness of what had passed, she felt quite certain that the circumstances were also unusual enough to justify the words which she had spoken. They had surprised herself; and now, on the day when she would see Guy again she divined that he had been speaking of himself. It was he who suffered spiritual fear, he whose soul was in

danger, and needed prayers to help it. A sense of awe came upon her. Guy believed that she saw; but she felt herself to have been hitherto blind. She had entered into a spiritual conflict, and, suddenly, she knew that it was a real one. "Pray for his soul." What a tremendous thing she had promised! And oh! how tremendous must be the Power whom she had invoked.

There came upon Florella a moment when "this earth we hold by seemed not earth," a moment when she did indeed "see."

Her sister's voice startled her.

"It's not going to be a fine day. Never mind, wet mist is characteristic of Ingleby."

Constancy was sitting up in bed. Her abundant hair fell over her shoulders in thick vigorous waves, her hands were clasped round her knees.

"Cosy," said Florella, with sisterly straightforwardness, "I hope you're going to behave better than you did at Waynflete."

"I haven't done any harm," said Cosy, with entire good humour. "Why should you all grumble? I haven't read an hour the less, nor given up a discussion, nor got a bit tired of being here. But I won't be only one sort of girl. People who have brains can manage a situation."

"I should have thought their brains ought to tell them when a situation was too big for them to manage."

"Really, Flo! You do say extremely clever things sometimes. Yes, so they ought. But this isn't a big situation, though Godfrey Waynflete is a *very* big young man."

"No, it isn't," said Florella, beginning to get up. "You're simply flirting, and talking fine about it. But, I don't think Godfrey Waynflete *is* flirting, and you may find that the situation grows."

"Well! I'll see if I can grow up to it," said Constancy. "But you know, in these days a

girl like me is much more likely to flirt too little than too much."

Godfrey appeared at the carriage door as they drove up to the Mill House, full of hearty greetings, big, bright and boyish as ever, but with a certain glow in face and manner which was unmistakable as Constancy sprang out, and lifting Rawdie, kissed him between his eyes.

Guy stood behind, looking on with repressed amusement, for he had not yet perceived that it was a "big situation." He acted host, and showman to the mill. He was pale, but so self-contained and like himself that Cuthbert could have thought the agitated confidence of the night before had been a dream. But Florella felt quite sure of her surmise regarding him, though he said no word to recall it to her.

Constancy had no intention but of spending another pleasant day in studying the "other side of life," and in teasing her companions;

but she did not know with whom she had to deal. If Godfrey had been either old enough to understand her, or timid enough to hesitate and lose his chance, she might have appeared to "manage the situation." But he began the day with a definite purpose, and laid his plans to suit it. The wet weather was much against him, as he could not offer himself to her, either when walking round the mill, or when sitting in the drawing-room, with Cousin Susan acting hostess. He did not, however, mean to be baffled, and while the whole party were listening to Guy's explanation of the looms, as well as the noise they made permitted, he said to her, with decision—

"I want you to come and see this," and as she complied, he led her quickly out of the long, many-windowed room, where the hands were working, into another where the great bales of wool were stored ready for use.

The windows were wide open, with the wet

air blowing through, there was a strong smell of oily wool; but Godfrey, with a soft, persistent step, led her round the piled-up bales, into a little open space between them. The window looked across miles of misty, smoky country, and the ceaseless roar of the machinery was softened by distance, so that they could hear themselves speak.

"I don't see anything to look at here," said Constancy, "and I want to understand how the weaving is done."

"There is nothing to see," said Godfrey. "I brought you here on purpose to tell you something. I—I love you. I mean to work with all there is of me to be worthy of you. I've only that one object in life, and I shall never have another. I—I've thought you liked me a little. You do—Constancy, don't you? You will, won't you? You know that I care for nothing else in the world but you."

He came close to her, taking her hands and looking down at her, with eyes to which

his eagerness lent a sort of fierce determination.

Constancy's heart gave a great throb as the blood rushed to her face, but startled as she was, she held her own.

"Now you are spoiling everything that is so extremely pleasant. You know quite well I never thought of anything of that sort. We have had such a very good time. Now, don't say any more. I never meant——"

"You must have meant it at Waynflete; you meant me to believe it."

"Now, you are making a great deal too much of things. Why, you know, I have my work at college——"

"If you care a bit for me, what does that matter?"

Godfrey's face darkened, and filled with passionate desire.

"You don't care for me?" he said, hoarsely.

"Well, no," she said, "not in that way. I'm not sentimental; and you—we—are much too

young to think of such nonsense. Let us find the others."

Godfrey stood in her path for a moment. He was smarting, not only under her refusal, but under her deliberate ignoring of his depth of feeling.

"I *am* young," he said, "young enough to wait, and I will *make* you care. The love I offer you is worth a great deal more than you pretend to think. I'll—I'll make you see that yet. Allow me—to show you the way back to the others."

He stood aside and pointed the way, forcing his manner into rigid politeness, but his face white, and his eyes fixing hers. His whole nature rose against defeat, though, as he fell behind her, he felt so miserable that, boy as he was, his throat ached, and unshed tears stung his eyelids.

Constancy felt strange thrills.

She dashed into the midst of the others, as they came out, and breathlessly remarked

on the beauty of the bridge they were crossing, "So picturesque," she said.

"If the stream was clean," said Guy.

"Well, you often call a dirty child picturesque; why not a dirty river, with a tree and a barn, or whatever it is? I think it's beautiful."

"Beauty that is marred," said Guy.

"Then it has more human interest," said Constancy. "It is another aspect of what I said about the summeriness of London."

She dashed into the discussion, and talked brilliantly, rousing both Guy and Cuthbert Staunton to talk too, while Godfrey hung behind, angered more than ever. He was obliged occasionally to speak, and even to hand tea-cups and open doors for the ladies. Such is the power of civilization. As she talked and smiled and managed, into her complex mind there flashed new ideas, and new knowledge. She had learned ever so much by that queer little interview. All kinds of new "mind stuff" had

come into her head. She had conceived her part of the scene very badly—but certainly—it was an experience, and as they drove home through the rainy mist, the experience translated itself into all sorts of forms. Godfrey had held the door of the waggonette for her; had given her her wraps, had offered all politeness, but he had neither spoken to her, nor touched her hand.

"Yes," she thought, as she laid her head on her pillow, "I can't be sorry for any experience. It's quite different from reading about it."

Then suddenly, as she lay in the darkness, she not only knew, but felt; something new and strange did indeed sweep over her, an overwhelming *might be*. Her spirit fell before it, and she hid her face, and cried.

"Cosy, did you find the situation bigger than you expected?" said Florella.

Constancy was silent till she could trust her voice, then said, abruptly—

"Yes; I wasn't skilful. Never mind, I'll manage better another time. I think it was inevitable—really."

"And you don't——"

"Don't reciprocate? No! It would upset all my ideas to marry before I'm twenty-five. And oh—you know, Flo, the Waynfletes are a fine type, and so on; but, dear me, one belongs to another century, another world, another universe. I don't know where the dividing line is exactly; but there's a mighty deep one somewhere."

"Perhaps he'll cross it—now."

"He did beat the record for the wide jump at his college!" said Cosy. "But he's just like his great-aunt. How *could* one marry a person who thinks it signifies so dreadfully *what* one thinks about everything. It's not that such as we think differently; but we don't think it matters much what we think, and they do."

"Poor Godfrey Waynflete!" said Florella.

"He certainly thinks it matters what you think about him."

"Good night," said Cosy, ending the conversation.

CHAPTER II.

CROSSING THE FLETE.

ALMOST before the waggonette had driven away from the door, Godfrey turned, round to his brother.

"I shall catch the last train," he said.

"The last train! Now? How do you mean to get from Kirk Hinton?"

"I can walk."

"In this weather? You'll reduce Rawdie to a mass of pulp."

"He can stop with you. Good night," said Godfrey, ramming on his hat, and marching off through the driving rain, while Guy shrugged his shoulders, and detained Rawdie.

"Ha, ha! you poor little beggar, you're

nowhere," he said. "You'll have to put up with me."

Kirk Hinton was a little station on the branch line which connected Rilston with the junction for Ingleby. It was four miles from Moorhead, and six from Waynflete, and as it contained no sort of conveyance, it was necessary for travellers to make arrangements beforehand if they desired to be carried to their destination.

Godfrey had ordered a trap to meet him on the next morning; but now there was nothing for it but to walk up hill and down dale through the pouring rain, and chew the cud of his bitter thoughts as he went.

The field path to Waynflete was of the roughest, and led over rainwashed stony tracks, through copse-wood and thicket, down to the bottom of Flete Dale, where the Flete beck was crossed by a rough wooden bridge near which was the Dragon, the little old public-house which had been there from time immemorial.

On the other side of the river a steep ascent led up to Flete Edge, beyond which lay the Hall. The road from Kirk Hinton took a much more gradual route, and crossed the Flete by another bridge at the end of the old avenue at the back of the house.

Godfrey was way-wise; but he had never taken the walk before, and he was confused by the storm and the darkness, and by his own miserable thoughts.

He had not given up his point. No; he was not defeated. He would neither avoid Constancy nor cease to recommend himself to her. He would meet her on every possible opportunity; he would not give way an inch. He would succeed unless—other fellows—? There were other fellows, of course. There was Guy.

Godfrey stumbled through a great clump of brambles and bushes, over a low wall and down a rough field to the riverside, where he dimly saw the bridge in the uncertain light. He felt chilled and miserable; his resolute hope failed

him. There was Guy. She always liked Guy, and he always roused himself to talk and laugh with her. Godfrey's angry spirit exaggerated these memories of friendly intercourse. His heart sank lower and lower. He paused on the bridge, and listened to the dreary roar of the wind through the wide plantations, and to the swirling rush of the stream beneath him. He could not see anything distinctly, but driving mist and swaying trees; but he came up out of the gloomy hollow as much convinced of his brother's imaginary rivalry as if the fiend, or the spirit, who had stood in the path of his unlucky ancestor, and so wrecked the fortunes of succeeding generations, had whispered the deluding suggestion into his ear.

How he reached the house he hardly knew, and then he wondered how he could account to his aunt for his sudden return.

Mrs. Waynflete, however, kept no count of his movements; she took no notice till the first train the next morning brought over the Ingleby

stable-boy with Rawdie, Godfrey's bag, and a note from Guy, in which he stated that he would not be able to come to Waynflete at present, as he was going on "a little outing" with Staunton. Godfrey felt certain that the little outing was to Moorhead, and when he read as a conclusion, "Cheer up, old boy; there's worse luck in the world than yours," he felt as if Guy was mocking his trouble.

Mrs. Waynflete was angry at the message. She thought Guy neglectful and indifferent to the place she loved so well. In those days, when the novelty of her surroundings destroyed her sense of accustomed comfort, she thought much. She was too good a woman of business to have left the future unprovided for, and she had long ago made a will in which the Waynflete property, together with certain investments, and half the share in the profits of Palmer Brothers was left to Guy, while the other half share made a fair younger son's portion for Godfrey.

But now, how could she trust Guy, either with the property or with the business? Was he not too likely to ruin both? Could she rely on him to carry on the work she had so bravely begun? She distrusted him deeply, and he did nothing to remove her distrust. She had always kept her will in her own hands; it would be easy to destroy it. But then, if anything happened to her, everything would be in confusion. An idea occurred to her, which in its simplicity and independence attracted her strongly. She would have another will made, in which Godfrey's name was substituted for that of Guy, and then she would keep both at hand. At any moment it would be easy to destroy one of them, much easier than to alter it, or to draw out a new one in a hurry, and she would put Guy to certain tests, and judge him accordingly. She would drive into Rilston and see the solicitor there this very afternoon, for it struck her that she did not wish to explain the workings of her mind to the old family

man of business who had made the will now in force.

At luncheon-time she was unusually silent, while Jeanie questioned Godfrey as to the events of the day before, and at last remarked, as she cut up her peach, "How funny it is that Guy should be such friends with Mr. Staunton!"

"Why?" said Mrs. Waynflete, abruptly. "Mr. Staunton seems a very well-conducted young man."

"Oh yes, aunt; but don't you know that he is descended from the wicked old Maxwell who ruined the Waynfletes. Constancy Vyner told us all about it. She said it was so interesting—to be friends with your hereditary foe."

"What's that?" said the old lady. "I ought to have been told, Godfrey; it's a very singular fancy on the part of your brother."

"Oh, I dare say Guy has very good reasons for the friendship," said Godfrey, sulkily.

Mrs. Waynflete made no reply. She released Jeanie from the duty of accompanying her on

her afternoon drive, and before she started, she wrote a note to Guy.

She drove into Rilston, gave her directions to the solicitor, and arranged to have the new will made out, and brought for her signature on the next day. Then she went back, and, dismissing her carriage at the bridge, prepared to inspect the needful repairs that were being made in the farm buildings and stables.

Godfrey, hanging listlessly about, saw her tall, upright figure, walking steadily over the bridge, and then, whether she caught her foot in a stone, or lost her balance, suddenly she tripped and fell.

With a shout of dismay he rushed towards her.

"Auntie! Auntie Waynflete! Are you hurt?"

"No, my dear, no; gently, don't be in such a hurry," she said imperatively, having already got up on her hands and knees.

Godfrey put his strong young arms round her,

and lifted her on to her feet, holding her carefully, and entreating her to tell him if she was hurt; while she told him sharply not to make a fuss about nothing, even though, to her own great vexation, she was so tremulous as to be obliged to lean on his arm, and let him lead her back to the house.

"No," she said. "No, I don't want to lie down, and I don't want a glass of brandy and water, and I don't want the doctor. I want to sit down in my chair, and see if my bones are in their right places."

Jeanie now appeared, fussing about, and very anxious to do the right thing, but the old lady would not even have her bonnet taken off, and hunted the two young people out of sight, asking them if they thought she had had a stroke, just as they were whispering to each other that, at any rate, it was nothing of that sort. They peeped at her from behind the creepers through the open window, and discussed whether they ought to send for the

doctor. But, as Godfrey said, he didn't know if there was a doctor to send for, such a person having rarely been seen within the walls of the Mill House; and, besides, to act *for* Aunt Waynflete was a new departure which neither dared undertake.

In the mean time, old Margaret, to her own great annoyance, found herself shedding tears. She was more shaken than she had guessed. She dried them rapidly, and then walked cautiously round the room, to see whether she was really herself and unhurt.

"The Lord be praised, there's no harm done!" she said. "But I've had a warning; and, please God, I'll take it, and prepare for my latter end. I'm an old woman, and should mind my steps, and not be mooning over the future or the past, when I should be picking my way. If my nephew Guy, like others before him, is but poor stuff, Godfrey's a different sort. I'll keep my eyes open."

She appeared to be none the worse for her accident in the anxious if inexperienced eyes of Godfrey and Jeanie, who scarcely dared to ask her how she felt.

The new will was brought to her, and was duly signed and witnessed. She locked it away with the former one, and with other business papers, in a table-drawer in her bedroom. She was prepared now for any emergency; but, in her heart, she was far from satisfied, and, in the solitude of the thoughts of age, she weighed the two young men against each other with a sincere desire to judge them aright. All the settled convictions, and all the saddest experiences of her life, told against Guy. All her affection, all her inclination, swayed towards Godfrey. And yet, angry as she was with her elder nephew, the tones of his voice, the set of his mouth when he had spoken his mind to her, recurred to her keen judgment, and she doubted still.

On the day after the signing of the new

will, she received the following answer to her note to Guy.

"Mill House, Ingleby,
"September 16.

"DEAR AUNT MARGARET,

"I shall not, of course, invite my friend to stay in your house again, now that I am aware of your sentiments on the subject; but I will avail myself of your permission to leave matters as they stand for the present, as I should be unwilling to involve myself in so ludicrous an explanation. Family feuds appear to me entirely out of date. I fear I shall not be able to come over to Waynflete at present, as I cannot leave Staunton, and you probably will not care to see him there.

"Your affectionate nephew,

"GUY WAYNFLETE."

This judicious and conciliatory epistle was put away by Mrs. Waynflete, with the two wills in her table-drawer.

It appeared to her that Guy, with a frivolity not new in her experience, scorned the sentiments and the convictions which had ruled her life.

CHAPTER III.

MINISTERS OF GRACE.

Cuthbert Staunton took Guy up to London to the house in Kensington to be inspected by a well-known doctor, who was also a personal friend of his own.

Guy despatched his petulant little note to his aunt before he started, and, perhaps, it was edged by his own discomfort, for he could hardly endure to be the subject of discussion and inquiry, and, the immediate effect of the night at Waynflete having passed off, held himself with difficulty to his resolution.

"You may trust me to tell him nothing against your wish," said Staunton, beforehand.

"I don't think you could tell him much,"

said Guy, oddly. "But," he added, "I wish to tell him that I am afraid of the brandy."

The man of science, when told that he suffered from palpitations and exhaustion after any "nervous strain," the expression substituted by Cuthbert for Guy's straightforward "when I am frightened," and also of this means of remedy, made due examination of him, and asked various questions, eliciting that he was easily tired, and that his heart did throb sometimes after over-fatigue or over-hurry, "but not to signify at all, that didn't matter."

And could he foretell when periods of nervous excitement were likely to occur, so as to avoid them?

"No," said Guy; and then he added, while his lips grew a little white, "I want to be told how to deal with the effects of it so that the remedy mayn't be worse than the thing itself. No one can help me as to the cause."

"Ah!" said the doctor, thoughtfully. Then he gave various directions as to avoiding fatigue, worry, or excitement. A winter abroad would be good, change of scene and occupation. There was no serious mischief at work at present; but there was need of great care and consideration. And with a gravity showing that he understood one part of the matter, severe restrictions were laid on the use of brandy and everything analogous to it, and other prescriptions substituted. "Mr. Waynflete mustn't be alarmed about himself; care for a year or two would make all the difference. He would grow stronger, and the nervous strain would lessen in proportion."

Guy looked back at him, but said nothing; and as he took leave, Cuthbert remained for a minute or two.

"That young fellow is a good deal out of health," said the doctor. "Hasn't he a mother or any one to look after him?"

"Not a soul capable, except me," said Staun-

ton. "I'm going to do it as well as I can, and he will let me."

"Well, remember this: whether he can avoid nervous shocks or no, *he must not have them.* And he can't be too much afraid of the brandy. Get him out of whatever oppresses him. It's the only plan. The heart is weak, and the brain—excitable."

"Should you like a spell abroad?" said Staunton, as they sat at luncheon at his club.

"I could not go," said Guy. "That would mean giving up having any concern with the business. And I haven't enough money."

"But if Mrs. Waynflete knew that it was a matter of health— You must really let your friends know that you have to be careful."

It was a new idea to Guy that the effects of his attacks were of importance in themselves, and naturally an unwelcome one. He looked rather obstinate, and went on eating his salad. After a minute or two, he said—

"I will do what I come to think is right. No one else can quite know."

"No; but don't you see, my dear boy, that whatever strengthens your constitution altogether will help you to — to — contend with your trouble—and make it less likely to attack you?"

"Yes," said Guy, slowly. "What other people say does help one to think."

"Well, there's no hurry to decide," said Cuthbert. "You still think you would like to go down to-night? Certainly, there isn't much on at present here. What shall we do this afternoon?"

A friend of Staunton's here turned up and pressed on their acceptance some tickets for a morning performance of Hamlet, in which he was interested.

"Should you like to go, Guy?" said Cuthbert; "there would be plenty of time to dine afterwards, and get our train."

Guy thought that he would like it, and it

was not till they were sitting in the stalls that it struck his friend that Hamlet was not calculated to divert his mind from the subject that engrossed it. Still, it must be familiar to him.

But Cuthbert failed to realise that, though Guy believed himself to have "read Shakespeare," it is possible for a country-bred youth, brought up in an unliterary and non-play-going family, to bring an extremely fresh interest to bear on our great dramatist, and though Guy was not quite in the condition of the lady who, in the middle of the murder scene in Macbeth, observed tearfully to her friend, "Oh dear, I am afraid this cannot end well!" he was but dimly prepared for what he was going to see. He gave an odd little laugh as the ghost crossed the stage, but watched intently and quietly.

"What do you think of it?" said Cuthbert, in a pause. "He's not so bad, is he?"

"He says some very remarkable things," said

Guy, seriously. "Things that seem true; but I never thought of them. Don't you suppose the ghost was *there*, watching for him to act, often though he couldn't see him?"

"Well, really," said Cuthbert; "I do think you have made a new remark on Hamlet. I never heard that suggestion. We can go, you know, if you're bored, any time."

"No," said Guy; "I like it."

Guy had the faculty of calling up distinct mental pictures. It was the method by which he thought, and the moving scene stamped itself, as plays sometimes will, both on his eyes and on his memory. When they came out into the daylight he felt bewildered as if the world outside was the unreal one.

"The ghost didn't do much good," he said; while Cuthbert, wishing he had had more forethought, talked lightly and critically about the acting, concerning which Guy was not critical at all.

When they set off on their night journey,

Guy grew quiet, and presently fell asleep. He looked tired, and the heavy eyelashes and the wistfulness, which, in sleep, his mouth seemed to share, made him seem younger than usual, and more in need of help. Suddenly he moved and started, while a look of shrinking terror came into his face. Cuthbert roused him, and he opened his eyes and caught his breath.

"Dreaming of the play?" said Cuthbert, lightly.

"No," said Guy. He leant back in his corner, and seemed slowly to master himself, for presently he gave a little smile, and said, "I'm all right, thank you."

Cuthbert thought that he could see exactly what the sort of thing was now, and how it came about. Presently Guy began to talk about Hamlet, asking many well-worn questions, and a few more unexpected ones. Cuthbert, who had been working up all the criticisms for a set of lectures, felt as he answered him rather like an orthodox, but personally inexperienced

professor of religion in the presence of an earnest young inquirer.

After a little while, Guy said reflectively, "It is odd that he found it so hard to obey the ghost, rather than to resist him. I don't much think Shakespeare ever felt one himself."

This tone of calm consideration of the psychological truth of Hamlet nearly made Cuthbert laugh, even while he was thinking of how to manage the young visionary beside him. It was years since his easy life had been invaded by so much anxiety for any one, years since he had had so lively an interest.

Guy fished out the right volume of "Shakespeare" from among the books that played propriety in a glass bookcase in the dining-room at Ingleby, when he had finished his supper at two o'clock in the morning, and took it upstairs with him.

On the next afternoon, perhaps happily to change the current of his thoughts, they were engaged to Mrs. Raby's garden party at Kirkton

Hall, a big house between Ingleby and Kirk Hinton, and the source of much of the gaiety of the neighbourhood. On arriving, after the long drive, they beheld Godfrey's flaxen head towering above the other tennis players as he prepared to play a match with Miss Raby, who was the champion lady-player of the district, against her brother and Constancy Vyner, who turned to Guy with a cordial and friendly greeting. She looked fresh and bright, and quite at her ease in Godfrey's presence. Indeed, she had told her sister that she came on purpose to show that she could "manage the situation." She had written Godfrey, instead of Geoffrey of Monmouth, three times in her Modern History notes that morning, and she spent much time in telling herself that she could never return his feelings.

And now, with boy and girl defiance, and yet with instincts old as the earth on which they stood, the one thing for which each of the pair longed was to conquer the other.

The play in that notable set was discussed by tennis-lovers for all the rest of the season, and the players never heeded the darkening of the sky, and the increasing weight of the air. Cosy's hand was as steady and her aim as direct as if no inner consciousness existed, she put into her skilled play every atom of force that she possessed. As for Godfrey, he was as mad as a Berserker, and he looked like one.

The game, owing to the equality of the players, was very long, and it by-and-by became evident to Florella that Miss Raby was getting tired, and was no longer playing at her best.

They were playing the last game of the set. "Thirty all" was called as, without a moment's warning, down fell a torrent of thunder, rain, and hail, enough to stop the most ardent players. Yet half a dozen more strokes—Miss Raby stepped back, exclaimed, "Oh, what a pity; we must declare the match drawn," and fled to the

house, while Mr. Raby snatched up and held over her a lovely and useless white lace parasol.

Constancy and Godfrey stood opposite each other for a moment in the drenching rain, both at once exclaiming, "Too bad!"

Then she laughed and scudded off with lifted skirt, while Godfrey felt a sense of baffled anger which even defeat would not have brought to him.

Then he had to walk rationally back to the house, and change his things, for the notes of a waltz suddenly sprang up. A big hall with a polished floor was cleared for dancing, fruit and ice were being handed round, and nobody cared very much for the thunderstorm.

Guy, looked out for the harebell blue gown, which he always associated with Florella. It did not occur to him that she had very few smart frocks at Moorhead. He asked her to dance, and it was not till they had spun two or three times round the dark polished floor that

his heart began to throb and flutter, and that it struck him that this was probably the sort of "exertion" forbidden to him. He felt miserable, and wished, not for the first time, that he had never spoken of his troubles. It was more endurable, locked up as it were in the cupboard in the wall, than now when it mixed itself up with his ordinary life. But the slight discomfort could not signify, the chief thing was to conceal it. He would go on dancing, and presently get some champagne. Florella, however, stopped of her own accord in the deep recess of a window.

"I'm not a very good dancer," she said, in her composed way. "You know I haven't been out very much yet."

"Don't you care for it?" said Guy, rather breathlessly.

"I like it a little," she said; "and it is lovely to watch, especially on a dark floor—crumb-cloths have no beauty."

The light was streaming in under the storm-

clouds through the narrow windows in dull yellowish rays, the flying figures passed in and out of the shadow, against a background of polished oak.

"I suppose," said Guy, "that you like painting better than dancing?"

"Oh, well," said Florella, in a tone that showed her to be Cosy's sister; "to say that is either a truism or a very priggish remark. You might as well ask if one liked strawberry ice best or poetry. But I like looking on best of all—feeling pictures."

"Do tell me what you mean?" said Guy, eagerly.

Florella was always impelled to talk, or, perhaps more truly, to think by Guy. She was drifting again into talk that belonged only to him, and that she would not have held with any one else.

"I don't quite know what else to say," she answered. "It is not exactly seeing things or noticing them. It is feeling the picture in them.

This dance has a picture in it. Often I don't feel so about things that are very beautiful."

"Did you ever see Hamlet?" said Guy, apparently with an abrupt change of subject.

"Oh yes, more than once. Have you seen the new Hamlet?"

"I saw it yesterday. I wish you'd tell me the meaning—what you see inside that."

"Oh," said Florella, laughing. "That's what many people have tried to see."

"I have read it all through to-day," said Guy, naïvely. "What puzzles me is how, as the ghost was real, Hamlet had any doubt about him."

"Why, you see he thought that it might be an evil spirit taking his father's shape."

"But if he had really *felt* it, he must have known whether it was good or evil. Seeing a ghost isn't like seeing a person outside you. Didn't you know that the other day when you spoke of the only thing that could have helped—Guy Waynflete?"

She flushed a deep crimson. There was something overwhelming to her in the conversation, and she could hardly speak. "That came into my mind," she said. "I never thought of it before."

"But you believe it?"

"Yes."

The rain was ceasing, and the dusty, misty light grew clearer and more radiant. The waltz finished in a glow of sunshine. Somehow the ghost and his own condition went right out of Guy's head. He took Florella to eat peaches, and began to talk to her in a more ordinary way, while the strain of their previous intercourse lifted itself from her spirit. They felt quite intimate and at home with each other, so much so that Guy explained why he did not ask her to waltz again, quite simply and without effort, admitting that he had been told to be careful. It seemed quite natural to tell her what he had been unwilling to own to himself.

He had hardly ever felt so happy, and when he was at ease, there was something sweet and bright in his face and manner which had a great charm.

Constancy, who paid him a gratifying amount of attention, told herself many times that he was much more agreeable than his brother. Certainly Godfrey looked neither sweet nor bright. He danced with Jeanie because there was no occasion to make conversation for her, and glowered at Constancy, and when Guy, certainly in rather an off-hand way, told him of his visit to London, and of the doctor's opinion, he only looked savage, and said—

"You don't seem as if there was much the matter with you to-day;" an answer which Cuthbert thought brutal, but which did not strike Guy as at all singular.

Godfrey had intended to say much to Guy about the advisability of coming to Waynflete, and taking his place as the elder brother, but he was unable to express it amiably, so his

honourable scruples took the form of remarking—

"I can't think why you're such a fool as to annoy Aunt Waynflete by having Staunton with you. You ought to come over, and of course she doesn't want to see him."

"I am not going to make myself absurd," said Guy, coldly. "What do I care who Staunton's great-grandfather was? He has been very kind to me."

"There's a great deal in bad blood," said Godfrey, obstinately. "It's sure to come out. He'll come across you somehow."

"There's not much to choose between our great-grandfathers," said Guy. "I'd just as soon have his as ours."

The agreeable little discussion was interrupted, and Guy only laughed as Godfrey was called away.

But it might have been a different person who said suddenly to Staunton, as they drove back to Ingleby in the moonlight—

"Cuthbert, the doctor thought I should get well, if I do take care, didn't he?"

"Oh yes, certainly. But you mustn't play tricks with yourself."

"Well," said Guy, seriously and cheerfully, "I mean to try; and, somehow, I think there's a chance for me, altogether."

Guy slept that night without dream or disturbance; but for Florella there was no sleep for a long time. A whole rush of thoughts filled her mind; of ghosts and demons, black spirits and white, bad and good angels. She did not feel "creepy," or in any way personally concerned, but she mentally realised, or, as she called it, "saw" all sorts of eerie situations. Guy Waynflete—she did not try in her thoughts to separate the generations—seemed to have been pursued by an evil power. Was there no good angel to help him?

Florella saw—as she saw the thought in her pictures—the radiant image, all light and wings and glory, the instinctive presentment of a

heavenly being which was her spiritual and artistic inheritance. Perhaps, in the light of that fair fancy, she fell asleep; but suddenly there was no outward vision any more, but a great awe and a passionate yearning within. A voice seemed to cry from the depths, "Oh, helping is so hard—so *hard!* There is no *angelness* left. It takes it all. My wings can't be smooth and tidy!" Florella woke right up in the morning sunshine. The vision was over, but she did not forget it.

CHAPTER IV.

THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET.

SHORTLY after this day at the Rabys, Mrs. Joshua Palmer went up to Waynflete ostensibly because she thought that she could be of some use to Aunt Waynflete in getting comfortably settled in there, and in finally arranging her household if, as seemed likely, she remained there for the winter, but really moved by something in her daughter's letters which excited her anxiety. It would not do at all to have "anything" between Godfrey and Jeanie, at their age. By-and-by, if anything really came of the fancy, things might be different.

Guy and his friend were therefore left alone at Ingleby, and two or three weeks passed

without much outward event, but of much inward importance.

Guy, whether wisely or unwisely, plunged into the study of such experiences as his own, and their possible explanations. He had no difficulty in these days in finding material, and he brought to bear on the subject an amount of acute intelligence and reasoning power for which Staunton had hardly given him credit. He puzzled him a good deal by his ridicule of some recorded stories, and his keen interest in others. He mastered the point of the various theories, stating and criticizing them with much force, and the discussions were certainly so far good for him that he lost some of his sense of unique and shameful experience. But Cuthbert saw that he tested everything by an incommunicable and inexplicable sense, and he never uttered any definite conviction as regarded himself. He had no "nervous attacks" as Cuthbert called them; but whether the terrible night at Waynflete had done him permanent harm, or whether

the strain was more continuous than appeared, he was certainly far from strong, and suffered from any extra exertion, so that the need of care was evident enough.

"I believe I was a fool to set you upon all this reading," said Cuthbert, one day. "You'll wear yourself out with it when I have to leave you."

"It would be very difficult to be alone," said Guy, thoughtfully.

"It's out of the question. You're not fit for the mill or for the hard winter here. You ought to have a sea-voyage, or something of that sort. Or, at any rate, come and stay on the south coast somewhere where I could make my head-quarters while I'm lecturing, and see you now and then."

"There are a great many things I can't quite tell you," said Guy, after a pause, "and they don't only concern myself. It's all right about the reading, but I've got something to do to-day. It's quite simple, only rather

hard. And I know 'he' doesn't want me to do it."

Guy had said nothing so personal since his first confession, and, as he got up languidly, and prepared to return to the mill for his afternoon work, giving his friend an odd, half-smiling look, as he moved away, Cuthbert felt an uncomfortable thrill.

It startled him to feel that Guy's conviction lay absolutely untouched by all his recent study. There was something inscrutable behind the pathetic eyes, and what was it? Was the boy "mad north-north west"? or would he at last compel belief in the incredible? Horatio, Cuthbert thought, had a great advantage in having actually seen the ghost that haunted Hamlet. Then he remembered making some remark to Guy on the "objective" character of this famous apparition, and Guy had answered, "But they only saw it, as you see a house or a tree. I don't suppose it made much difference to them."

Guy betook himself to the mill, and called John Cooper into the room where the bottle of brandy was still locked up in the cupboard in the wall. He had often been as conscious of its presence there, as he could have been of that of the ghost; every morning he thought about it more and more persistently, and every evening when he went away he knew that the day's victory had left him with less strength for the morrow's conflict.

Now, when he went up to the cupboard, and turned the key in the lock, and, with his keen ears heard the old manager's step crossing the court—it was to him as if another hand pushed the lock back—and another than himself suggested a different reason for the summons. But he stood still, leaning against the wall, till the old man came into the room.

Then he put up his hand, and let the door swing open.

"John Cooper," he said, "take that out, and

take it away with you. I'll own you had right on your side. But you shouldn't have cackled about it to Mrs. Waynflete."

"Well now," said Cooper, in a rougher echo of the young man's slow, musical voice, "I've thought of that myself. I'm glad you've come to a better mind about it, Mr. Guy, for I'd not be willing to see the old missus disappointed in your future."

"She don't expect much," said Guy. "Now then," after Cooper had taken the brandy-bottle out of the cupboard, and set it beside a file of bills. "Now that you see I'm not going to send the business and myself to the dogs, shut the door, I've something to say."

John Cooper obeyed, and Guy sat down by the table.

"Now then," he repeated, "we are going to the dogs, and you know it. Let's look it in the face."

"Eh, Mr. Guy, trade's fluctuating. "We'll

pull round without letting th' owd lady know there's aught wrong."

"Look here," said Guy, opening a paper, "d'ye think I've no brains in my head? Look at the number of orders for this year, and last year, and ten years back. Look at the receipts. What's the use of spending money on setting all those out-of-date old looms in order? Where's the sense of manufacturing the sort of goods people don't want, instead of what they do? Is that the way these mills were run sixty years ago, when old Mr. Thomas managed the business?"

"He got the new looms, sir."

"Exactly so; and wouldn't he have seen long ago that they were worn out. Look here, John, we'll have to pull up, and put our shoulders to the wheel, or we'll have Palmer Brothers down among the failures before many months are over."

"Eh, Mr. Guy, for the Lord's sake don't say so. Don't mention such a thing. 'Tis those

new mills over Rilston way—and the price of coals—and trade being bad ever since the Government—— Eh, my lad, just think of your old auntie, seeing all her life work undone, and having to sell the property she's so proud over."

Here Guy started slightly, as the old man's voice choked.

"But we're not going to fail," he said. "We're going to fight it out and pull through; that is, if you back me up."

John Cooper stared at him incredulously. Besides his natural surprise that this "laddie" was old enough to have a say in the matter, and besides his not unjustifiable suspicions of him, Guy's delicate outlines and look of ill-health—in fact, his whole air—was so unlike that of the powerful old woman who had so long held the reins, that the identical form of the lines into which his lips set, was unperceived, and the sudden, keen glance that came through the silky black

lashes, from the usually absent eyes, was startling.

"You know well enough, sir," said Cooper shakily, "that there's nought I wouldn't do for the old lady and the business. She's been a grand character all her days, and if there's a curse on the Waynfletes, she set her teeth against it when she was but a slip of a lass, with rosy cheeks and eyes that could look the sun down."

"Ay?" said Guy. "What d'ye mean by a curse on the Waynfletes?"

"Well, sir, of course it's only a manner of speech; but there were plenty to say that Marg'ret Waynflete'd bring Palmers her own ill luck. Now, I say, Marg'ret never brought ill luck to any man; and Mr. Thomas had the best of good fortune when he took her with her shawl over her head and without a penny. Bad luck'll never overtake her now in her old age."

"It will, unless we set our teeth against it

pretty hard. I'm going to fight. Now, look here, it all depends on what money or credit can be produced now. In a few months it will be too late. I'm going to make my aunt attend to what I have to say; and, if I can, get her to trust me. For she'll have to trust me with all she has, and make me the master, or down we shall go. And what you've got to do, is to tell her honestly, from the bottom of your soul, that *you* trust me, and know I've got her own grit in me. So now, I give you my solemn word of honour that I'll never touch a drop of strong drink till 'Palmer Brothers' is itself again, and Waynflete safe; and, if I fail, may I become part of the curse myself. So here goes!"

He took up the brandy-bottle, and threw it out of the window, down into the shallow, dark-dyed stream below. They heard it crack against the stony bottom.

"Now then," said Guy, "will you back me up?"

"Lord, Mr. Guy! That was unnecessary behaviour," said the bewildered Cooper; "and very strong language to use. But I'll go along with you. You've brought me to look the Lord's will in the face—which isn't easy at seventy-eight—for there's not a matter of four years between me and the missus. But I'll serve you faithful, Mr. Guy; and if the Almighty means us to fail——"

"But He don't," said Guy. "It's quite another sort of person that means it. Now sit down, and we'll talk business."

As Guy marshalled his figures and his facts, asked penetrating questions, and prepared the statement to which Mrs. Waynflete must at all costs be made to hearken, Cooper, who had a hard enough head of his own, silently gave in and yielded his whole allegiance. Only when the interview was over, he said, pleadingly—

"You'll be gentle, Mr. Guy? For it don't come easy to old folks to turn their minds

upside down. It is easy for a young lad like you to act."

"Think so?" said Guy, with a queer, sad look. "Well, I'll do what I can."

He was much more tired than was good for him, as he came in to the study, in the rapidly increasing darkness of the autumn afternoon. Cuthbert was not there, and all his sense of courage and energy failed him; for, the more resolutely a nervous strain is encountered, the less power of resistance is left. He grew drowsy in the dusk, then roused up suddenly to the agony of panic-fear, to the intolerable sense of his enemy within him. He might cover eyes and ears, but it entered by no such avenues — anything to drown — to bury it. There was whisky in the cupboard. He staggered to his feet, and the next moment Cuthbert's hand was on his shoulder.

"Steady, my boy, steady. What is it? Lie down again. I am here; you'll be better in a minute."

Guy clung to the hand of flesh and blood as if he had been drowning. He hid his face, not hearing one word that Cuthbert said. He was not merely suffering terror, but struggling, fighting to free himself, to escape, to *separate* himself from the influence that seemed to be upon him, resisting and opposing it with all his strength. "Oh, help—help!" he gasped.

"Yes—yes, my dear boy. Lie still. It will pass off directly."

And very soon, in two or three minutes, as Cuthbert counted time, the agony seemed to cease, and Guy dropped back, deadly faint, but with closed eyes and smooth brow.

Cuthbert brought him, as soon as he let go his desperate hold, some of the remedy provided by the doctor, and tended him with a care and kindness altogether new to him.

"It's *much* better with you here," said Guy, presently, as if half-surprised.

"Of course it is. You were so tired; no wonder a bad dream upset you."

Guy lifted his heavy eyes for a moment, and looked at him.

"A *very* bad dream," he said drily. "It's over now."

"Tell me what it was?"

"He came, that's all. No, I can't tell you. You don't understand; but you help."

Cuthbert did not think him fit for an argument, and sat by him in silence. He felt that the sight of Guy's agony had tried his own nerves somewhat. It was an odd turn of fate, he thought, that brought a quiet, everyday person like himself, to whom no great heights or depths, either of character or of fortune, were likely to come, who held steady, unexciting opinions, and expected no revelations about anything, to be guide, philosopher, and friend, to this strange being, for whom the balance swung with such frightful oscillations.

Guy was very quiet all the evening, submitting with a little surprise to his friend's

precautions, but evidently finding it comfortable to have done with concealment.

Only, the last thing of all, he looked at Cuthbert with his mocking smile on his lip—"What a 'softy' I should be," he said, "if this was what you think it!"

CHAPTER V.

THE MOTHER'S BOOK.

SOME few days before the stay at Moorhead came to an end, Kitty Staunton received a letter, which surprised her greatly, as it came from a person of whose existence she had never previously heard. It was signed "Catherine Maxwell," and began, "My dear young cousin," and stated that the writer had heard from her old friend Mrs. Raby that the Miss Stauntons were staying at Moorhead, and that, as she believed them to be her cousin George Maxwell's grandchildren, it would give her great pleasure to make their acquaintance; would they come over and spend the day with her at her little cottage at Ouselwell, bringing with them any

of their young friends who cared for the drive?

Kitty and Violet being curious and interested, and Florella being inclined for the expedition, the three set off one fine brisk morning over the moors on the opposite side to Kirk Hinton, and came to a little cold, fresh village, high up on the side of a narrow valley. Here in a cold, fresh little house, with latched doors painted with thin white paint, and deeply recessed windows looking into a little garden full of hardy plants, now turning brown and yellow with the autumn frosts, they found an apple-cheeked old lady dressed in a shot-silk gown of so old a style that it was just about to come again into fashion. She spoke with so strong a northern accent that the London girls caught what she said with difficulty; but she made them most heartily welcome, gave them some very thin and long-legged fowls for dinner, followed up by curds and red-currant jelly. Then she showed them sundry curiosities, which

they knew how to admire. There was a filigree basket, like to the one which Rosamond of the Purple Vase made for her cousin's birthday, and for which she was so unmercifully snubbed by the common sense of her unfeeling parents. There were engravings in oval frames, bits of Leeds china, an old spinning-wheel, and finally, a quaintly shaped card-table, which on being opened, displayed, instead of green cloth, an exquisitely worked pattern of faded roses in the very finest tent stitch.

"And that, cousin love," she said, "was in Waynflete Hall when it belonged to my great-grandfather Maxwell."

"Really!" said Kitty, with much interest. "Our brother Cuthbert is staying with Mr. Guy Waynflete at Ingleby now. It was through him that we came to Moorhead."

Miss Maxwell looked quite awestruck.

"Well, well," she said, "young people's ways are different. I should never have made myself known to Mrs. Waynflete, nor should I think

of calling at Waynflete, even if I visited at that distance. Not that I keep up old grudges, my love, but there's a delicacy in such matters."

"Cuthbert knew Mr. Waynflete a long time before they knew about any former connection. I don't think it troubles them, they are great friends."

"Ah!" said Miss Maxwell. "*Guy*, too, I hope——"

"Cousin Catherine," said Violet, boldly; "I am sure you can tell us delightful old stories of the two families. Do! Tell us about the ghost and the Guy Waynflete who never got back in time. Have we got a ghost as well as the Waynfletes?"

"Oh no, love," said Miss Maxwell, "our family was never of that kind; and indeed, when there's so much drinking and dissipation as there was among the Waynfletes, there's no need of ghosts to bring ruin. And I'm sure your brother will always remember, that it was

all in the way of business my great grandfather obtained the place."

"And how did he lose it again?" asked Violet.

"My dear, through business misfortunes," said Miss Maxwell, with dignity. "And Ouseley, which is only a few miles up the valley, was sold in my father's time. But I've been thinking, there are no Ouseley Maxwells left but me. And I have a few old letters which perhaps your brother ought to have."

"I'm sure Cuthbert would be delighted to come and see them and you," said Kitty.

"Oh no, Cousin Catherine," interposed Violet; "do let us see them. We can tell Cuth, or give them to him; but old family letters, especially about Waynflete and the ghosts, would be quite too awfully jolly."

Miss Maxwell looked at the blooming girl with her outspoken voice and her straight-looking eyes, her sailor hat, and her boyish

jacket, as if she had never thought of any one like her before; she sighed and looked solemn, but pulled out the drawer of the card-table, and took therefrom, with great mystery, two or three yellow-looking letters, an old Prayer-book, and a very dirty pack of cards, and on one of these she pointed out a dark stain. "My loves," she whispered; "this was stained on that fatal night with Squire Waynflete's life blood."

Violet became suddenly serious, and Florella could hardly help crying out in protest against touching these things which seemed to her full of a living trouble.

Miss Maxwell opened the Prayer-book which was bound in red morocco, most delicately tooled and gilt. On the title-page was written "Margaret Waynflete" and the dates of the births of her two sons. "Guy Waynflete, born June 19th, 1760," and then "My Pretty Baby;" then "Godfrey Waynflete, 1764," and then in the same pointed, careful hand—

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him."

Florella could not speak a word, and when the book was handed to her to look at, she laid her hand on it with a soft, reverent touch.

Then Miss Maxwell with some ceremony opened the two papers, and begged Kitty to read them aloud.

The first was in the hand of this long dead Margaret Waynflete, and was evidently the brief commencement of a journal or diary.

Feb. 10*th*, 1785.—My son Guy has gone to London.

Feb. 12*th*.—We have killed another little Pig.

Feb. 13*th*.—Attorney Maxwell is more Obliging than I like to See.

Feb. 14*th*.—My Brother Godfrey did begin by Mistake the Funeral Service instead of the Marriage, for an honest couple. This Comes of Carousing. Alas!

March 25*th*.—My Chittyprat Hen has a Fine

Brood. There be no letter from my son Guy, which angers his Father. My poor Boy. He is better even in Town than Here. Does God indeed permit the Spirit of His wicked Ancestor to Trouble Him? Alas! there is Wickedness Enough Alive.

April 15th.—The Pain at my Heart is great, I have nigh Swooned with it. N.B.—To distil lavender and drop Into it Cloves, for a Cordial. Death would be No evil, but for my two Sons, but this House would be no Home.

Here the brief record suddenly stopped, only lower down on the page were faintly and unsteadily written the words, "My dear son."

"There *was* the ghost then, you see," said Violet, in awestruck tones. "Oh, go on, Kitty. It *is* interesting."

"There's no more," said Kitty. "The other paper is quite different."

This was dated October 10th, 1785, and began—

"I, George Maxwell, Attorney-at-law, feel it

incumbent upon me for the Establishment of my Character as an Honest Man, to state in writing what passed after the Shocking and Lamentable Suicide of Guy Waynflete, Esquire, of Waynflete Hall, which Property is legally mine by the Terms of the Bond between Us. Since there be not wanting envious Persons to say that I Took advantage of young Mr. Waynflete's Illness, which Prevented his Return at the Given Date. When he Arrived in the Early Morning, he was Undoubtedly in liquor, which was his Custom, therefore His Statement that the Spirit of his Ancestor, Guy Waynflete, Who Betrayed his Friend, and the Father of his Future wife, and so Disgraced his Family at the Time of the Lamentable Rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth, stood in his Path, and Prevented Him from Crossing the River Flete, hath no Credit with Reasonable Men. There be Some that say Highwaymen are Plentiful, but Lies, in the mouth of this Young Gentleman, are more Plentiful still. At the sight of His

Father's Corpse he fell into a swoon and Awoke Raving, in which Condition he Died This Morning. The Lad Godfrey is but a Loutish Youth, but I am Willing to Assist Parson Godfrey to put Him to some Honest Calling. I do not Hold with Country superstitions, and I shall Instruct my Wife and Daughters that the Gallopping of the Horse Round the House be nothing but the Wind in the Plantations."

"Well!" said Violet, with calm emphasis, "whatever the Waynfletes were, our ancestor was a beast, and I hope the Stauntons were more respectable."

Florella sat quite still. She knew the sound that was called the gallopping of a horse, and had once or twice been taken in by it, as a child at Waynflete, and she felt as sure as if she had herself experienced it, that whatever the evil was, inward or outward, which had defeated this unhappy Guy Waynflete a hundred years ago, it was alive and at work still. And

she knew, too, that she had ranged herself on the other side, and entered into definite conflict with it.

The result of this visit was that a post-card from his sister summoned Cuthbert Staunton up to Moorhead on the day after Guy's interview with John Cooper.

He was shown his old cousin's treasures, which she had entrusted to Kitty for the purpose, as soon as he arrived, and studied them with a grave face, and with a far deeper interest than his sisters guessed.

"I think," he said, "that these things ought to be given back to the Waynfletes. I shall go and see this old lady, and see what her view is."

"Oh yes," exclaimed Florella, suddenly, "Mr. Staunton, I am sure they ought to have them."

"In any case," said Cuthbert, "I will take them and let Waynflete see them. And I say, I think you had better drop joking about the ghost. It was a great tragedy, and they might not like it."

"Well, but it's all nonsense, and dead and done for," said Violet.

"It happened," said Cuthbert.

He looked so serious, that Constancy's keen eyes noticed him with inquiry, and Florella, oh, how much she wondered what he knew.

They all walked out together to see the departing purple of the autumn moor, now fading into russet, and as they went down the road, a boy trotted up on a pony, and put a telegram into Cuthbert's hand.

"*From Guy Waynflete, Ingleby Station. My aunt has sent for me. I must go, excuse me. Make yourself comfortable. Will telegraph when to expect me back, but not to-day.*"

Cuthbert uttered a dismayed exclamation which frightened the girls, and obliged him to read the telegram aloud.

"Why, how very polite, and how very extravagant to telegraph up here! You would have heard when you got back. He must have paid five shillings for it!" said Kitty.

"He is rather punctilious," answered Cuthbert. "But I hope nothing is wrong. He is not well, and I am sorry he has had to go off in this way. He meant to go to-morrow."

The words expressed Cuthbert's anxiety very inadequately; he fell silent, and Violet said—

"Well, he'll have a more comfortable journey than the old Guy, and there won't be quite so much depending on his getting there by a particular moment."

"I told you to let all that subject drop, Vi," said Cuthbert, sharply.

When the visitor was gone, Florella walked aside, and, in the late afternoon, she went away by herself over the withering heather to the rock where she had shown Guy the harebells.

There was no blue now, either in flowers or sky; the wind was driving a heavy, smoky mist before it, and the air was, as Dante calls it, "brown."

Could it be possible that Guy had meant *her* to know what he was doing?

She knew, she saw, that the old story was not "dead and done for"! There came upon her an awful, formless dread that Guy would never reach Waynflete "safe." She stood quite still, with her eyes wide open, and one hand holding by the jagged rock beside her. Her soul was alive within her, and wrestled with the angel—whether of light or of darkness, she did not know. She held Guy's soul with hers as with her hand she might have held his, giving him all her strength, and her spirit stretched and strained as the muscles might have done in a struggle for dear life. There were at first no words within her. It was a shapeless foe; but gradually as she pitted all the force of her soul against it, there came into her the sense, not only of fear and peril, but of evil—images, thoughts, words, flashed into her innocent soul. Hitherto she had had no consciousness of prayer, only of struggle, but now she cried out to the Presence that was with him and her to reinforce her strength.

And happily, blessedly, that Presence within her was not without form and void, she dropped on her knees, sobbing out over and over again the prayers of her earliest childhood. For the form that was within her was that of the Son of God.

When Florella came back to the outer world, and felt the wet mist on her face, and the wind blowing through her hair, and pulled at the damp heather with her hand, there was scarcely any daylight left. She could hardly recall at first what had passed within her, nothing remained clear, but a picture in her mind of the Flete beck, and of the woody hollow through which it ran, such a picture as she "saw" when she was going to make a sketch. She felt silly and confused, as if she did not quite know where she was, and as if she had worked herself up into an agony that had no cause or meaning.

Then she thought of Guy Waynflete, and she knew that the unconscious child-heart, with

which she had entered that valley, had gone for ever, and that, whatever else she had given him in that mysterious hour, her love had gone out to him beyond recall. Interest, helpfulness, sympathy? These he had in a manner asked for, and in giving them, she had given how much more? She had flung herself out of herself to help him, and behold, she had come back to herself, with yearnings and longings and hopes and fears, that seemed full of selfish passion. The poor angel had fallen out of the sky!

The wet wind stung her hot cheeks with its cold blast. Suddenly she moved, and climbing up the rock, peered anxiously into the bunch of withered harebells, which had once stood up so brave and blue in the heavenly blue around them. There was—yes, there was one little living bud at the tip of a withering stem. Florella did not pick it or take it to herself. She was going away to-morrow; she would never know if it came into flower. Perhaps

she would never know how Guy had reached Waynflete.

She kissed the little bud, and then pulled her cloak straight and went home to supper, shutting up the new burden tight in her breast.

Constancy, meanwhile, was sitting comfortably by the fire, when there was a crack of wheels on the wet gravel, a deep voice outside, an opening door, and Godfrey Waynflete's tall figure and flaxen head in the doorway.

"Why, this is a surprise!" exclaimed Cosy. "Then there is nothing amiss at Waynflete, though your brother was sent for."

"Then Guy has been here? I knew it——"

"Not at all. But Mr. Staunton has, and your brother telegraphed to him to say that Mrs. Waynflete wanted him, and he had to go over."

"Guy had to go to Waynflete? My aunt sent for him?"

"So it appeared. Did you come here to look for him—so late?"

Godfrey stood still, confused and unable to

put two and two together so as to see what had taken place. He had posted some letters for his aunt yesterday, in his careless preoccupation, half an hour too late, and to-day he had had a telegram from Guy.

"Constancy!" he cried, "I see, think, feel, no one but you. I was determined that Guy should not spoil my one chance of a last word with you."

"But what made you suppose your brother was here?" interrupted Constancy.

"He sent a telegram about a trap—at Kirk Hinton. I tore it up. I wasn't going to let him interfere with my last word with you. He might get a trap for himself."

"And you didn't send it? Then you had better go after him as quick as you can; Mrs. Waynflete wanted him, and I wouldn't have her disappointed for the world. Is she ill, dear old lady? Why did you come away? And oh, if I was your brother, wouldn't I give it you when you got home again!"

Cosy stood up by the mantelpiece. Her eyes glittered mischievously. She enjoyed seeing Godfrey out of countenance.

But Godfrey, after the first moment of surprise, felt nothing but that he was with her and alone. He came close up to her, and stood towering over her.

"Constancy, I'd do a good deal more than that to buy this five minutes. Won't you give me a little hope? You'll never have another fellow give himself, heart and soul and body, to you as I do. I love you."

"And I love fifty other things and other people. I haven't got a bit of feeling for you!" cried Cosy, desperately. "Why, I'm making a story out of you as you stand there before me. Is that caring anything about you?"

"I don't know, and I don't care. I only know that I want you. Give me a chance. Without you I shall never come to good."

"I don't think you will," said Constancy, suddenly and keenly. "I have said no, and

there's an end of it. You seem to have played a very mean sort of trick on your brother, and you can't expect to get any good out of it. You certainly won't from me."

"Constancy——"

"If you were a little older and wiser, you would know what an impossible sort of way you have behaved in. But I suppose you must be excused, because you are a boy, and know no better."

He turned white with anger.

"I don't know if I love you, or hate you," he said. "But you shall never say that to me again."

He was gone in a moment, leaving Constancy stirred, upset, and frightened, so strong was the contest between his boyish and foolish behaviour, and the impression of strength and passion made upon her by himself. She was quite sure that she hated him.

Godfrey sprang into his dog-cart, and drove down the rough, stony hillside, at a break-neck

pace. He was mad with anger at Constancy and at himself, while stings of conscience and vague alarm pierced the tumult of wrath, and added to its heat. He thought neither of ghost nor ancestor, as he drove madly along the stony lanes that led through the valley of the Flete; but he pressed on, as though driven by furies, fear of what he might find gradually forcing itself upon him, till, as he reached the bridge, and looked towards the house, he saw that the windows of the octagon room were full of light. In sudden alarm, he dashed on up the old avenue to the stable door.

CHAPTER VI.

"As I went down to the water-side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide."

Mrs. Waynflete said nothing about the effects of her fall on the bridge, but she did not quite recover from the shock of it; and, accidental as it had been, she knew quite well that it would not have happened if her tread had been as steady and her sight as clear as had been the case six months before. She had one or two other little slips and escapes, and she said to herself that they were "warnings."

People often know their own condition much better than is supposed, or, than others do, and Mrs. Waynflete knew as well as any doctor could have told her that her hour was coming.

She was very glad that no one else appeared to suspect the fact. She did not like sympathy, and even yet she did not feel herself to require support. But she thought much within herself. Those two wills lay heavy on her mind, and so did Guy's criticisms on the management of the mills. She hated to acknowledge as much; but she was really too clever and too experienced a woman not to know that there was more than a possibility of his being right. She had known too much of the books and accounts in past days not to know that of late she had not known them so well. Moreover, her first distaste to Waynflete continued. She did not get accustomed to the bed that she had to sleep in, nor to the chair she had to sit on. She scorned the young vicar, Mr. Clifton. She even felt that she would have liked to have a talk with old Mr. Whitman of Ingleby, and perhaps let him read her a chapter, though she never had consulted him in her life on any matter, spiritual or temporal. And on one

point, in these autumn days, spent in this unfamiliar ancestral home, she changed her mind. She had always meant to be buried at Waynflete, though she had never chosen to live there; but, now, she resolved that she would lie by her husband's side, in Ingleby churchyard. All her life had been spent at Ingleby; she had been born there, in the poor farmhouse which she had so despised. "The lads," the male heirs, her brother's descendants, might make their graves among the old Waynfletes if they liked. As she had dimly felt at first, the object of a life's labour is not so dear as the labour itself; and whenever the charms of Waynflete were discussed, Margaret felt that she was an Ingleby woman. She was as constant to the facts of her life as she had been to the idea that had dominated it.

Under the influence of these feelings, she one day sat down, and wrote to Guy a note in which she told more of the truth than she had admitted to those living in the house with her.

"Waynflete Hall.

"My dear Guy,

"I took your remarks as to the management of the business very much amiss, as it has always been my way to follow my own judgment, not finding that of other people any improvement on it. But I perceive that it is your right to have your say, and I wish to hear it. I am an old woman, and I shall not have my hand on things much longer. I feel my time is coming, and I would not wish to leave injustice behind me. So I desire that you come over here at once without delay, and put before me what you have got to say, and satisfy my mind on the points that lie between us. Besides, my dear, I wish to have you both here with me.

"Your loving aunt,

"Margaret Waynflete."

When Guy received this letter by the second post, on the day that Staunton went to Moorhead, the last sentence more than all the rest

made him feel that he must start at once for Waynflete; manifestly the note had been delayed, or he would have got it in the morning. As it was, he could not reach Kirk Hinton till four o'clock.

He was touched and a good deal alarmed, not so much at the summons as at the inclination to listen to him, and hurriedly putting his papers together, set off, and at Ingleby station sent a telegram to Godfrey, since his old aunt disliked receiving them, saying briefly—

"*Send trap without fail to meet the four train at Kirk Hinton.*"

And then, moved partly by a desire to explain himself to Cuthbert, and partly by a sudden strange impulse to tell Florella what he was doing, he despatched the other to Moorhead. Spite of this impulse, he thought little of his dread of Waynflete, as he pursued his journey by train, and waited at the junction for that which was to take him to Kirk Hinton. He

was very full of what he had to say to his aunt, and much moved at the tone of her summons.

As the train stopped at Kirk Hinton, the station-master hurried up.

"Mr. Waynflete! Have you had a telegram from Waynflete Hall?"

"No; what's the matter?"

"We despatched one, sir, an hour ago, to say that Mrs. Waynflete had had an accident this morning. Here's a copy, sir."

"A telegram? What was it?"

"*Aunt Waynflete has had a bad fall. Come. From Mrs. Palmer to Guy Waynflete.*"

Guy stood still for a moment, and caught his breath.

"They expect me," he said. "Is the trap here?"

"No, sir; nothing's here. We sent on your telegram this morning. The lad that brought this one said he gave it to Mr. Godfrey."

"I must go on," said Guy. "Send my things

as soon as you can. I suppose the field way is the quickest?"

"Yes, sir, by a matter of two miles. The evening's very soft—we'll be having a wet night. Good evening, sir. Keep on by the stiles. And I hope ye'll not get there too late."

The words struck on Guy's ears, as he hurried down the hill in the dismal light of the October afternoon. When Godfrey, also troubled in spirit, had been forced to take this rough and dreary walk, its discomforts had added to his sense of anger and injury, but Guy hardly heeded them, though he knew that the six miles up and down the sharp edges of Flete Dale was almost more than he could manage without breaking down, especially as the sudden summons and alarming news had been a bad preparation for extra exertion.

"Too late!" If he did not reach his old aunt in time to satisfy her, if not about his view of the business, at least about himself, it would be

a bitter hour for him indeed. If it was possible — if he could be satisfactory? Thoughts, hitherto latent, rose up so strong and full within him that he felt as if he had received a sudden increase of reasoning power, in spite of the fatigue against which he could hardly struggle.

There was his bad health to begin with. How could he ever satisfy any one, any more than that Guy Waynflete whose face, whose constitution, and doubtless whose soul he inherited? That Guy who *drank?* Who ever overcame that impulse, which seemed no more moral or immoral than the palpitation of his heart?

Probably, after all, the cynical common-sense view of that Guy's miserable failure was the true one. The Dragon, the little public-house which must be passed close by the river might account for it better than highwayman or ghost. Perhaps he, too, had been tired and ill, and had stopped there to get strength to go on—and had

not gone on in time. And the Dragon was there still in the same place. The turn to it must still be passed on the way to the bridge.

And as for the ghost? Was that, too, an hereditary affection of the nerves, a monomania; in fact, just that dislocation of the brain which made both him and his ancestor irresponsible for their actions, a sign that showed that they were not free agents, that the dreadful and degrading fate that had overtaken his namesake was equally inevitable for himself? Yes. The Being that haunted him and controlled him was nothing but Himself, and his "objectivity" only the chimera of an abnormal brain. He looked, and behold there was nothing, no voice, nor any to answer.

This awful conviction was more terrible to Guy than any haunting ancestral spirit, than any tempting fiend. It was possible to fight with "principalities and powers, rulers of darkness;" but to wait helpless for the inevitable

outcome of his *Self*, to see drunkenness, degradation and madness unroll before him—to know, not that he would lose his soul, but that he had no soul to lose; no foe to fight with—no friend to help.

For, if this dreadful sense of an evil presence within him which grew and darkened as he came down the rough field to the river's side, was only a bogie of his imagination, then no heavenly presence could be real either, if the only spiritual experience that he had ever, as he called it, "felt," was a delusion, he could not believe that any other could be real.

But, in the horror of these thoughts, he passed the turn that would have led him to the respite and relief of the Dragon public, and never knew the moment when he did so. He came to the river-side. The water was deep enough here for drowning, for making an end both of the past and of the future, a fit end for the fool who lived in dread of his own fancy, and feared—*himself*. Well, he was not

frightened now, only desperate, which was a worse thing.

What was this, that mingled with, that almost lightened his formless horror? It was the old familiar panic that he knew so well; the physical terror that was wont to seize upon him unawares. It did not surprise him that there, on the centre of the crazy bridge, stood, visible to his eye, the "counterfeit presentment" of the terror that he felt within, the ghostly image of his ancestor and of himself. He sank down on his knees, he could not stand, or he must have turned and fled. The form was shadowy, but the awful, hopeless, evil eyes were clear as if they looked close into his own, much clearer, as he knew, than mortal eyes could have been, so far off, in so dim a light. He and his Double looked at each other. Guy was perfectly conscious, wide awake, alive all through. He fell forward on the grass, and hid his face, but the companion Presence was not to be so shut out. "Feeling," as he had

said, was worse than seeing. He looked up again.

"Will he come here, if I don't go there?"

And, suddenly, he knew that *he had a choice.* Through his agony of nerve and bewilderment of brain this conviction shot like an arrow.

"I shall fall, or he'll drown me. I can never pass him; but *I can try.*"

He staggered up on to his feet. His soul was set on edge by the jarring contact of this thing of evil, to draw near, instead of to fly, was more than flesh and blood could bear. He broke into a wild, mad fit of laughter—laughter that echoed, till he did not know which laughed, himself or his Double. They seemed to mock and to defy each other.

"Myself or my devil!" shouted the living Guy. "If you kill me, or damn me, you shall not stop me! Here or there—within or without. Come with me if you choose, I'll not be too late!"

He staggered forward, his head swam, his eyes grew dizzy, his Double swayed before him, he knew not which was plank and which whirling, rushing water. Then, in the murky, swinging mist, there was a sense of something still and blue, and, for an instant, Florella's face.

He sprang at it, and knew no more, till he found himself lying on the stones, half in and half out of the shallow water. The bridge was behind him, and, as he looked fearfully round, the haunting figure still before. Yes, before him on the hillside. It had *come with him*, while the angel face that had saved him was gone.

He came to himself, as usual, with the sense of deathlike fainting and sinking, which he knew too well. It was almost dark, he had no idea of the time, or whether he had been moments or hours in crossing the bridge. He had no longer any thoughts, hardly any fears. No words of prayer had come through to him

in the awful conflict; but now, as he tried to move and lift himself up, he instinctively murmured, over and over, like a lost child, "Oh God, help me to get up the hill."

END OF VOL. I.

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